

Five soldiers killed as IRA launches Christmas offensive

Two devastating bomb explosions killed five British soldiers in northern Ireland yesterday as the IRA began a Christmas offensive. There would never again be a truce, it said. Army speculation that the IRA is planning a campaign lasting another seven to 10 years was confirmed in an interview published in a Dublin newspaper.

Many years of terror threatened

From Christopher Thomas
The Provisional IRA yesterday launched a Christmas offensive with two devastating bomb explosions which killed five British soldiers. The Provisionals said there would never again be a Christmas ceasefire. Four young soldiers who came from Northern Ireland two weeks ago died when a big landmine exploded under their Land Rover near Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. As the vehicle was going into the air, landing gear yards away, 20 shots in high velocity rifles were fired at another Army Land Rover a short distance in front. It was not hit.
The four occupants fired back, but do not think they hit anything. It was all over in less than a minute.
The soldiers were on patrol the main road from Dungannon to Ballygawley, which is through rolling hills and is a main route for IRA guerrillas. It is about 25 miles from the border.
The four murdered men, all married, died at 9.45 am as their vehicle was blown to bits by a bomb of between 1,000lb. A large crater was left in the ground.
The blast shattered the day morning quiet as local people made their way to work. It was heard across the 15 miles away.
L/Col Charles Richards, aged 49, of Bromsgrove, Worcester; Sgt Simon Peter Evans, 19, of Chippingham, Wiltshire; Sgt William John Beck, 23, of Belfast; and Sgt Alan D. Ayrton, 21, of Warrington, Lancashire. They were members of the 16th Air



The deposed Shah of Iran and his wife on the Panamanian island of Contadora.

Some hostages 'may be free by Christmas'

From Patrick Brogan
Washington, Dec 16
The American hostages in Tehran will not be tried, the Iranian Foreign Minister said today.
Mr Sadegh Qotbzadeh, who was speaking in a television interview transmitted by satellite, said the hostages would appear as witnesses, not defendants, at the international tribunal which he intended to set up to investigate the Shah's alleged crimes. Furthermore, he would try to have some of the hostages released before Christmas.
He said that an international delegation would not be allowed to visit the hostages. Instead, Protestant and Catholic clergy members would be allowed to conduct church services for them on Christmas Day and would then be able to see all the hostages.
Mr Qotbzadeh, according to news agency reports, said in Tehran today that the hostages would be tried immediately after Christmas.

The contradiction is further evidence of the difficulty the American Government has in dealing with the Iranians. Foreign ministers are frequently contradicting each other. Even senior revolutionaries such as foreign ministers contradict themselves on the same day.
Mr Qotbzadeh said that the Shah's departure for Panama was a victory for the Iranian people.
He went on to say: "Now that the Shah has been kicked out of the United States, there are some other things that should be cleared up before the question of the hostages is entirely resolved."
Asked about a trial, he replied: "At this time no trial will go on, and what is going to happen is a grand jury investigation of the Shah's crimes and American foreign policy here. That we decided and we will go on with it."
Later, asked whether he meant that there would be no trial, he replied: "I am hoping so come to that conclusion. The crisis of the next couple of weeks I am hopeful they will come to some agreement. First of all, the wealth of the Shah should be returned to Iran, then the international tribunal... should try the crimes which have been committed in Iran."
Asked about the ruling of the Hague court, he said that its proposal to hear Iran's complaints against the Shah and America after the hostages' release was "absolutely ridiculous."
The Shah was flown to Panama yesterday by the United States Air Force. He had been staying at a hospital at an Air Force base near San Antonio, Texas, since December 2, when he had left New York after treatment for cancer.
The sanctuary for him in Panama was arranged with the assistance of General Omar Tor-

Dead Sea power goes live for Israel

From Christopher Walker
En Bokek, Dead Sea, Dec 16
Using a blend of sun, salt, water and sophisticated technology, the Israelis have developed a revolutionary source of energy which the Government believes will significantly reduce its crippling dependence on imported oil by the turn of the century.
Soon after sunset tonight, a solar power station was switched on here close to the Dead Sea. Still in an experimental stage, it generates 150 kw of electricity or enough to supply the needs of 30 families.
Developed over the past 20 years, the mini power station is run by combining two Israeli inventions: a panel of dense safety windows that generate thermal energy and a turbine that responds to low-energy input.
By developing the process and using 400 square kilometres of the Dead Sea, Israeli experts maintain that by the turn of the century they will be able to provide 2,000 MW of electricity by the method. This is equivalent to the whole of Israel's present energy needs.
Mr Yigzhak Modai, the Israeli Energy Minister, presided over tonight's ceremony which he described as a breakthrough in attempts to solve the world's energy crisis.
"We are not talking about the supply of any commodity," he said, "but one which can provide an alternative to oil, something being used by the main countries to try to wreck the economies of others." He estimated that the present cost of solar-produced energy was equivalent to that from a hydroelectric plant.
Tonight's long-planned ceremony came only hours after Israel radio reported that the country's oil and petrol prices will increase by 40 per cent at the end of this month. It came less than four weeks after the handback to Egypt of Israel's only viable oilfield.
Although the 150 kw generator at En Bokek is still experimental, it is part of a carefully planned programme which is geared in stages towards the year 2000. The next development will come in 1981 when a 5,000 kw power station will be operational and producing commercial electricity.
The process is complicated, but in layman's terms relies on the harnessing of heat trapped between two layers of water of different salinity. The thermal energy produced is then used to power the turbine.
Although the brackish Dead Sea water provides the perfect base for the process, it is claimed that it can be developed for use in any part of the world where there is sufficient sun, water and land space—the salt being added artificially if necessary.
Two of those hanged were officials at the Ministry of Irrigation. The foreign companies were not named.—UPI.

British formula brings hope of final Rhodesia accord

David Spanier
Dramatic Correspondent
"Prospects of a final agreement on a ceasefire in Rhodesia dramatically last night, a weekend of intense negotiations between the British and the Patriotic Front alliance.
A new British formula, designed to meet the Patriotic Front's objections about its ability under the ceasefire to accept, Mr Joshua Moyo and Mr Robert Mugabe, would be invited to initial the art of the Southern Rhodesia constitutional conference today, led by a full signing ceremony on Lord Carrington's return from Washington on Wednesday.
The ceasefire, which ended a Sunday on a note of high tension, when Lord Carrington and the Salisbury delegation initiated the document, but the Patriotic Front, Mr Barry rejected the ceasefire.
The British compromise proposal—worked out by telephone via the Governor's office in Salisbury—is to provide the Patriotic Front forces with a new assembly place situated in the semi-central area of the country, which the Patriotic Front sees as the heartland.
A major part of the guerrillas' objection to the British

plan was that the proposed assembly areas were all round the periphery of the country, leaving the centre close to Salisbury. Although this new site, the sixteenth in the ceasefire proposal, falls far short of the guerrillas' demand for 31 areas, there was strong hope in Whitehall last night that they might accept it.
The guerrillas, however, coming under strong pressure to settle from their own supporters in the front line states, and despite much hot talk from their spokesmen in London about fighting to the finish in Rhodesia, it is clear that everyone concerned is really longing for a peaceful settlement. The decision by the

Churchill case not seen as security risk

By Our Political Reporter
Mrs Margaret Thatcher is expected to tell MPs in a parliamentary written reply today that the case of Mr Winston Churchill, Conservative MP for Streatham, will not be referred to the Security Commission.
The written reply will be in answer to Mr James Wellbeloved, Labour MP for Bexley, Erith and Crayford, and a former Labour Junior Defence Minister, who asked in a priority written question whether the Prime Minister would refer to the Security Commission the evidence given by Mrs Soraya Khashoggi about her relationship with a politician involved in defence matters.
Since the tabling of the question Mr Churchill, who was a junior Opposition spokesman on defence until last year, has admitted that he was the Mr X with whom Mrs Khashoggi, when giving evidence in a recent trial at the Central Criminal Court, said she had had an intimate relationship.
The Prime Minister is expected to state that there was no question of security involved. Resignation call: Mr Dennis Canavan, Labour MP for Stroud, West, has called on Mr Churchill to resign his parliamentary seat (the Press Association reports). Mr Canavan said it would be the honourable thing to do.
However, he added that he would be satisfied with the promise of a thorough inquiry.

Steel strike looks certain after talks over cash and redundancies collapse

Paul Roudledge
Four Editor
A national strike in the steel industry early next year looks inevitable after the breakdown of talks between the TUC, Congress, the unions, and the Government over redundancies and the British Steel Corporation's cash crisis.
Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Industry, has declined to permit an increase in the ceiling on the borrowing of the industry next year, and executive of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ITC) is expected to confirm a strike call to 90,000 BSC employees in two days' time.
An indication of how wide is the gap between the Cabinet and the unions came at the end of talks with the Industry Secretary on Saturday, when Mr Murray, general secretary of the TUC, is understood to have told Sir Keith: "Talking you are like trying to teach a deaf man."
Sir William Sirs, general secretary of the ITC, is embarking on EEC business and tomorrow. He will European metal unions not allow steel through to British consumers normally supplied by the ITC. The strike goes ahead as planned on January 2.
The steel workers' executive in London on Wednesday on Thursday there will be a meeting of the confederation's member central negotiating committee. Both groups are expected to reaffirm the shutdown action sent out after BSC refused to improve 2 per cent offer.
The TUC steel committee will compile a report on the industry's crisis to the routine monthly meeting of the TUC general council on Wednesday. The buck is almost certain to be passed back to the steel committee, several prominent members of which were absent from the talks with the Industry Secretary.
With the Christmas and new year holiday period intervening, it now looks as though the ITC will be out on its own, with only the railwaymen supporting the strike by refusing to transport iron ore or steel products by rail during the industry's

Price rise causes Opec confusion

Libya has thrown the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries into confusion by increasing the price of its crude oil by \$4 a barrel on the eve of today's price-fixing meeting in Caracas, Venezuela. It now appears that the attempt by Opec members, led by Saudi Arabia, to bring a stable price structure back to world oil markets must have a much slimmer chance of success. The price rise is important to Britain in that the Libyan crude is of the same quality as the oil in the North Sea, and has always been sold at a premium.
Page 17

Permission expected for first US-type reactor

A statement giving permission for the first nuclear power station in Britain to be based on the American type of pressurized water reactor is expected in the Commons tomorrow. But extensive modifications will have to be made to the controversial reactor before it can be used in Britain.
Page 2

NHS pays German bill

A National Health Service patient has won a six-month battle to have a hip operation in a West German clinic at a cost to the service of £4,000, about twice the cost of a similar operation in a London teaching hospital.
Page 3

PLO men murdered

Allegations that the Israelis were responsible for the killing in Nicosia of two Palestinian Liberation Organization officials were made when the bodies of the two men were flown to Beirut. The officials, wrapped in Palestinian flags, were met by hundreds of uniformed guerrillas.
Page 6

Hovercraft bid talks

At least three groups are considering a bid for a combined Seaplane Hovercraft cross-Channel hovercraft operation. Talks are taking place with Hovercraft. The Government is thought to favour a move involving denationalization of the long-making British Rail subsidiary.
Page 3

Action against terrorism

Strong measures against terrorism come into force in Italy today. They provide for life imprisonment without parole for terrorist killings and the murder of judges and police officers. Penalties for wounding are doubled if the crime is committed by terrorists.
Page 4

Employment Bill plea

Union leaders are to demand a Labour Party commitment to repeal the Employment Bill, being introduced by the Government. Mr David Basmann, chairman of the TUC economic committee, said that the Bill was "the beginning of a series of legislative shackles."
Page 2

Storm havoc at sea

A freighter was wrecked in a Cornish cove, a fishing boat was presumed lost off Shetland with a crew of seven and a small boat with two on board was missing off the west coast of Scotland in stormy weather.
Page 3

Thatcher visit to US begins

Mrs Margaret Thatcher left London by air yesterday for a two-day visit to the United States into which she has packed a gruelling programme of political and social events. It is her first visit to the United States since taking office.
The Prime Minister, who is accompanied by Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, will find the United States wholly preoccupied by the plight of its hostages in Tehran. This will dominate her talks this morning with President Carter at the White House.
The two-hour talks will also cover a wide range of subjects including Northern Ireland.
The two leaders will also discuss economic and military questions, relations with the Soviet bloc, energy, Southern Rhodesia, and the EEC.
Mrs Thatcher will have talks at the Pentagon, with the Federal Reserve Board, and at the headquarters of Exxon Chemicals.
Leading article, page 13

Day of doubt in Tube strike threat

Commuters and Christmas shoppers could face severe disruption on London's Underground today from an unofficial one-day strike by train drivers over back pay.
The strike leaders say their action is supported by drivers from at least nine depots, with the possibility of support from others.
It was not clear yesterday how many Tube workers would join the strike and how many would heed an appeal to work normally by Mr Ray Buckton, general secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen.
Lines that could be affected include the Jubilee, Bakerloo, Piccadilly, Northern and Circle

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HOME NEWS

Extensive modifications will be needed to US-type reactor before it can be used in Britain

By Pearce Wright
Science Editor

Extensive changes will have to be made to the controversial American type of pressurized water reactor if it is to be used in Britain.

Although a statement expected in the Commons tomorrow will give permission for the first nuclear power station in Britain, at Sizewell, Norfolk, to be based on that reactor, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate will be in no position to issue a licence for its operation without the modifications.

That is clear from a report to the Government of an investigation that started three years ago.

100-page executive summary of the report will be published at the same time as Mr David Howell, Secretary of State for Energy, makes a statement in Parliament of the Government's long-term nuclear power policy.

That will be a commitment to order at least one nuclear power station a year from 1982 for 10 years, at a total cost of £15,000m.

Reports prepared for the Government on the Three Mile Island accident will also be released. But the Review of the Generic Safety Issues of Pressurized Water Reactors, which forms the executive report, will lead to the most searching questioning of Mr Howell and his advisers.

It explains how the safety standards in Britain are more rigorous than those in the United States, and hence the deficiency of the American system.

Nevertheless, the report emphasises an opinion that there appears to be no intrinsic engineering reason why the safety levels demanded in the United Kingdom cannot be met for the pressurized water reactor.

The recommendations point to the changes needed at the manufacturing stage, of the design of extra protection in operating a power station, and of better procedures for fault analysis of operations (like the control of fuel rods) which are expected to be needed relatively frequently.

There are also questions connected with corrosion of fuel elements and other components that can be answered to satisfy safety requirements in Britain only after research, because present knowledge is inadequate.

Attention is also drawn to the higher levels of radiation to which workers at nuclear stations using pressurized water reactors are exposed. Alterations in design and construction would not eliminate that entirely, but the gap between present British practice and that in the United States would be narrowed.

The difficulty of finding a site remote from centres of population is also examined briefly in the executive summary. The density of population in the United Kingdom is much higher than in the United States.

The consequent disadvantages that arise in trying to adapt the reactor to meet the conditions for the places most favoured for nuclear power stations by the electricity generating boards in the United Kingdom raise fundamental issues of safety and security.

The full nature of those questions is not covered in the executive summary on safety, but is the subject of the far weightier report on which it is based. A demand for that document to be made available level off when the government shows the shorter version become known.

There is already a questioning mood about secrecy in nuclear reactor safety studies.

An early day motion being put down today calls on the Government "for the immediate release of not any abridged summary, but of the full secret, unabridged safety reports on the pressurized water reactor and the advanced gas-cooled reactor carried out by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, the Nuclear Power Company and the electricity generating boards".

Unions seek pledge on Prior Bill from Labour

By Our Labour Editor

Trade union leaders will today seek a firm commitment from Labour politicians that they will repeal the Government's proposed legislation on the closed shop and secondary picketing when they are returned to office.

Arguments for the repeal of Mr James Prior's Employment Bill will be put to a meeting of the TUC-Labour Party liaison committee at Congress House when the scope for opposing the Conservatives' strategy is discussed.

Mr David Bassett, chairman of the TUC economic committee, said yesterday: "We need to coordinate our reactions to the Government's proposals inside and outside Parliament immediately. We also quickly need to make it clear what a future Labour government will do if such legislation is introduced."

All the indications are that the current Bill is the beginning of a series of legislative shackles we are going to get through the period of this government."

The scope of the original Employment Bill published 10 days ago is likely to be expanded after the Law Lords' decision last week in the case of *Express Newspapers v. MacShane*, which held that "secondary" picketing in furtherance of an industrial dispute brought in by the Labour government in 1974.

The TUC has rejected the Bill as it stands as "irrelevant and grossly unfair" and any move to restrict further the legal immunities enjoyed by trade unionists is certain to face increased opposition.

It is against this background of growing hostility between union leaders and the Government that the Labour Party hierarchy has to decide whether to give the blanket commitment to repeal the Bill, or to offer a more limited pledge to repeal the Conservative reform package, parts of which are thought to appeal to some members of the shadow cabinet.

Call for debate on death of boy who feared cane

From Our Correspondent Nottingham

Teachers opposed to corporal punishment in schools yesterday sent a telegram to the Prime Minister calling for an emergency Commons debate on the case of a boy who was "driven to suicide by fear of the cane".

Mr Tom Scott, education secretary of STOPP, the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment, said: "This is the worst case we have come across in 11 years. It is the first time we have actually heard of anyone who has killed himself apparently as a direct result of the cane."

The boy who died was Raymond Parker, aged 14, an only child, of Robin Hood Avenue, Worsley, Nottingham. He shot himself through the head with a 22 gun last week after being told he would have to face his headmaster the next morning for playing truant for a week.

The headmaster at the boy's school, Maden Comprehensive School, Worsley, Mr Barry Ellis, said: "My conscience is clear. We do not cane boys for playing truant; those who frequently offend, Raymond would probably have been put on report."

Crisis in the steel towns 1—Port Talbot: Welsh front line for jobs cuts

Split over strike as bubble burst nears

From Tim Jones

When night falls the giant steelworks resembles an angry dragon with fire and smoke billowing from its nostrils. The whole town, assuring people that the mighty furnaces are blazing away.

This is Port Talbot, the boom town of south Wales, where high wages are spent in a dozen luxurious clubs built for a future safe with steel.

Now the bubble is about to burst as the town finds itself in the front line of the British Steel Corporation's plan to cut up to 15,000 jobs in Wales, a measure which some politicians forecast will lead to 50,000 redundancies in the principality.

At the Mount View social club retired steelworkers sit among the Christmas decorations, yodeling unimpaired remarks about Mrs Thatcher.

"She is pushing us back to the thirties; you should stand up and be counted like we did then. It is time for a national strike to force her out."

The remarks are addressed to younger men, British Steel employees who do not yet know whether they will be among the victims if the workforce is halved as expected from its present level of 12,000.

The argument is taken up by Mr Peter Lea and Mr Colin Hill, both in their early forties, both socialists and lifelong union members. Mr Hill, a

union branch secretary, favours the strike called by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation for January 2 as the only method of showing solidarity and opposition to the cuts. Mr Lea considers the strike a "madness", saying that it will give the company the excuse to close the plant totally.

Their views, sincerely held, have split the workforce at the plant, who share only the certainty that the good times have gone. At another table, Mr John Bamse, aged 46, reflects that after 25 years in the industry he faces a future on the dole if his job goes.

The men seem convinced that if British Steel takes the option of making steel at Port Talbot and sending it 50 miles to Llanwern to be processed—the longest production line in the world—it would be an economic blunder that would seal the fate of both plants.

Given the choice of miseries, the men favour the slimming of both plants thus retaining the potential capacity to meet any upsurge in world demand.

The men are deeply resentful that Ravenscraig in Scotland appears to be getting preferential treatment when, according to British Steel's figures, the Scottish division's record shows a yearly loss of £3,261 an employee compared with a £165 loss per man in Port Talbot and £945 at Llanwern.

A union leader said: "It is obviously a political decision made to stem any growth of nationalism in Scotland."

7.8 per cent, one point below the average for Wales. Mr Thomas knows that without large development aid that figure could increase to horrifying proportions as small companies dependent on the steelworks shed men to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

Behind the scenes at the works there is frantic union activity and an unvoiced realization that the choice could be between the total closure of Port Talbot or Llanwern, the steel plant that provides the economic base for Newport and most of Gwent.

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The men at Port Talbot are pinning their hopes on the fact that the ore they use is shipped virtually straight into the works from a tidal harbour, making it much cheaper than Llanwern's, which has to be transported farther by rail. Port Talbot also uses a much higher proportion of cheap imported coal; an item, incidentally, which could threaten the future of 21 of south Wales's 36 pits.

But Llanwern's rolling equipment is more modern and it probably has the advantage in iron and steel making as its number three blastfurnace, opened a year after completion because of an industrial dispute, was until recently the most modern in the United Kingdom.

In the past two years steelworkers in Wales have seen the closure of East Moors, Cardiff, and end of steelmaking at Ebbw Vale. And by next summer Shotton will have gone, too. Shellshocked and demoralized, it is extremely unlikely that the men of Port Talbot have the will or power for a national general strike.

Rather there is a determination to enjoy this Christmas as never before and then to fight for the largest compensation they can negotiate. With grim resignation they say that Geoff Frey Howe would be best advised to stay away from his home town. He is not at the moment its most favourite son.

Next: Corbett

Senior MI5 cover for spy claimed

By Stewart Tendler

Professor Anthony Blunt may have had an accomplice among senior MI5 officers in the 1950s, according to Mr Goronwy Rees, who played a key role in originally identifying the professor as a Russian agent.

Mr Rees, the academic and author, died in hospital last week and in his last days was interviewed by Mr Andrew Boyle, author of *The Climate of Treason*. Yesterday Mr Boyle, whose book helped to provoke Professor Blunt's spy confession, said in *The Observer* that Mr Rees told him the MI5 man was not a spy but a double agent.

At that time Mr Rees wanted to go to the secret services to report a discussion he had had with Burgess many years previously, in which Burgess had said that Professor Blunt was an agent. The MI5 man saw Mr Rees with Professor Blunt and they tried to dissuade him from giving the authorities his information with argument and a veiled threat.

The MI5 man served at a crucial period in the 1950s when Professor Blunt and many others were being investigated in the wake of the defections of Burgess and Maclean. He is now said to be dead after retiring when the CIA refused to work with him. Mr Boyle said the evidence surrounding the MI5 man was circumstantial but sinister.

Mr Rees's evidence is interesting in the light of a comment made by Mr Brian Sewell, a friend of Professor Blunt, shortly after the Prime Minister revealed the professor's former role in the Commons statement last month.

Mr Sewell said that the professor had had a friend in MI5, but the man had died several years ago. The man was in any way a Russian agent but was loyal to Professor Blunt as a friend.

Yesterday Mr Sewell continued to refuse to disclose the name.

Atkins-Hume agreement saves Ulster talks

From Our Own Correspondent Belfast

Mr Humphrey Atkins, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, has rescued his proposed constitutional conference on power devolution from the brink of collapse. Plans are going ahead to begin the talks at Stormont on January 7.

The conference was saved after Mr Atkins gave an assurance to Roman Catholic political leaders that no issue will be barred from discussion. That was enough to persuade the Social Democratic and Labour Party to take part.

Soon afterwards the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionists, said he stood by his decision to join the talks but the Official Unionist leaders remained determined that they would not participate. The non-sectarian Alliance Party will also be there.

The agreement was reached at a meeting at Stormont Castle on Saturday between Mr Atkins and Mr John Hume, the SDLP leader, and confirmed later by the party's executive and constituency representatives.

To the SDLP to the conference Mr Atkins had to retreat from his earlier insistence that there could be no discussion of an Irish dimension to any agreement on devolution. That clearly is no longer the case.

Mr Paisley, whose new moderate position is the latest and strangest phenomenon of Ulster politics, might on that basis have been expected to withdraw his decision to attend, but he said he saw no reason to do so.

The reason behind the decision may be found in the bitter rivalry between his party and the Official Unionists, and a desire by Mr Paisley to outflank them over their outright refusal to join the "time-wasting" conference.

If some sort of agreement could be reached in the coming

months, Mr Paisley will have scored an enormous political coup and thus will have substantially advanced his ambition to be the main spokesman for Ulster Protestants.

Mr Brian Lenihan, the Irish Republic's new Foreign Minister, said yesterday that he saw some light in the Ulster situation. He was particularly optimistic about the prospects of success now that there was strong leadership in Britain and Ireland, he said.

In Ulster, too, a faint air of optimism can be detected, although Mr Hume was anxious last night to point out that the difficulties to be overcome at the conference were enormous. He should be right. 1980 should be an interesting year for Anglo-Irish relations.

The agreement between Mr Atkins and Mr Hume, which has been committed to paper, says clearly that the SDLP will be free to put forward papers containing its own proposals.

The agreement says the conference is not an end in itself and is merely a means of identifying the highest possible level of agreement on the transfer of responsibility for certain functions to locally elected representatives.

It says that although there is no serious prospect of agreement on a return to the power-sharing government of 1974 arrangements to take account of the interests of the minority by sharing the exercise of governmental powers will be on the table for discussion.

The crucial paragraph states in part: "Even after such a transfer of responsibility further political development remains possible depending on the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland."

Mr James Kilfedder, independent Unionist MP for Down North, who resigned from the Official Unionists nearly a year ago to join the talks, said the leadership, is considering the formation of a new party.

could not get a management qualification without management experience but could not get such experience without management training.

Mr Bundele Ojuti, aged 39, a Nigerian living in Holway, north London, and Mr Samuel Oburoni, aged 34, a Ghanaian living in Walthamstow, north London, were both accepted for a Diploma of Management Studies course at the Polytechnic of Central London for October, 1979, and applied for grants under the Training Opportunities Scheme (Tops).

Mr Ojuti was working at Plessey's as a test engineer and since his arrival in Britain in 1961 had obtained a Higher National Certificate and Diploma in electrical engineering, and had become a graduate of the Institute of Electrical Engineers.

He could not become a chartered engineer, however, without management experience.

Mr E. S. Rixon, a training consultant with the Manpower Services Commission, recommended that he be sponsored under the Tops scheme, saying that he was suitable in all respects and the course would

enhance his chances of obtaining a management position when he finished.

A commission selection panel, however, rejected him because of his lack of managerial experience.

Mr Oburoni was working as a nurse at the time he applied for sponsorship but was before as a higher clerical officer in Hackney Hospital, north London.

To improve his prospects he had obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Sciences from the Polytechnic of Central London.

Those who can be accused of being "work-shy". There is no direct link between unemployment and the retail price index, but governments in the past have generally tried to eradicate the so-called "why work syndrome".

It is one of many proposals being examined by Treasury ministers and other departmental colleagues to cut down on public expenditure. It is finally approved the measure would almost certainly cause a storm with trades union leaders.

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Iraqi still held after bringing in explosives

A young Iraqi arrested after 21b of explosives were found in his luggage at Heathrow airport, London, last week was still being questioned by detectives last night.

The man, in his early 20s, arrived on a Middle East Airlines flight from Beirut with the explosives hidden in tubes of shaving cream, and three detonators. They were discovered in a routine drug check by customs officers.

Africans' claim of discrimination is rejected

By Annabel Ferriman

Two Africans who were refused sponsorship on a management training course failed to prove that the refusal was indirect discrimination, an industrial tribunal has ruled.

The two men alleged that the refusal by the Manpower Services Commission to sponsor them was indirect discrimination, indirectly discriminated against them because it was harder for blacks than for whites to get management experience.

The tribunal, in Victoria, London, sympathized with the men caught in a trap. They

could not get a management qualification without management experience but could not get such experience without management training.

Mr Bundele Ojuti, aged 39, a Nigerian living in Holway, north London, and Mr Samuel Oburoni, aged 34, a Ghanaian living in Walthamstow, north London, were both accepted for a Diploma of Management Studies course at the Polytechnic of Central London for October, 1979, and applied for grants under the Training Opportunities Scheme (Tops).

Mr Ojuti was working at Plessey's as a test engineer and since his arrival in Britain in 1961 had obtained a Higher National Certificate and Diploma in electrical engineering, and had become a graduate of the Institute of Electrical Engineers.

He could not become a chartered engineer, however, without management experience.

Mr E. S. Rixon, a training consultant with the Manpower Services Commission, recommended that he be sponsored under the Tops scheme, saying that he was suitable in all respects and the course would

enhance his chances of obtaining a management position when he finished.

Union withdraws BL talks boycott threat

A threat to boycott talks with the BL management on Thursday has been withdrawn by the Transport and General Workers' Union.

The company has given assurances that the meeting in London, will not be about the Edwards reorganization plan or an immediate pay deal, but will involve industrial relations and collective bargaining.

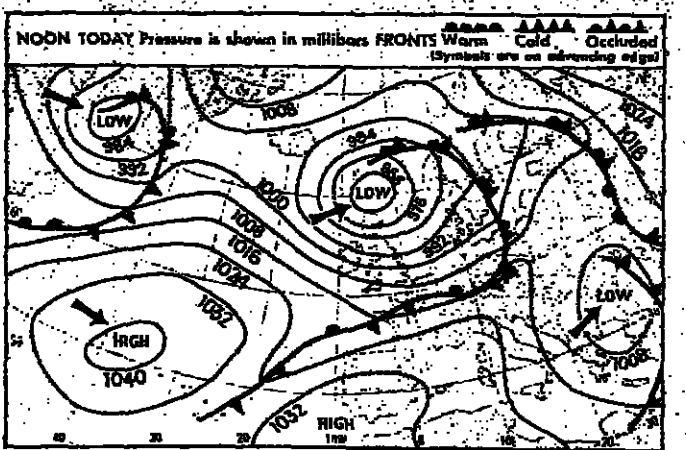
Sir Michael Edwards, chairman of BL, whose plan to lose at least 25,000 jobs and close or partly close 13 plants, is opposed by the union, will not attend the meeting.

The inquiry set up by the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers will hold another hearing today into the dismissal of Mr Derek Robinson, the Longbridge shop stewards' convener.

Swimming pool check

The regional swimming pool built at Peterborough two years ago for £2m has been closed while a safety inspection is made. A preliminary inspection disclosed that parts of the ceiling are in danger of falling.

Weather forecast and recordings



Today
Sun rises: 5.32 pm
Sun sets: 5.32 pm
Moon rises: 5.27 am
Moon sets: 3.3 pm

New moon: December 19, Lighting up: 4.22 pm to 7.32 am.
High Water: London Bridge, 12.14 pm, 6.4m (21.1ft).
Low Water: London Bridge, 5.29 am, 11.8m (38.8ft).
Dover: 9.25 am, 6.2m (20.3ft); 9.33 pm, 6.3m (20.5ft).
Hull: 4.20 am, 6.6m (21.7ft); 4.49 pm, 6.2m (20.2ft).
Liverpool: 9.41 am, 6.6m (21.7ft); 9.33 pm, 6.6m (21.7ft).

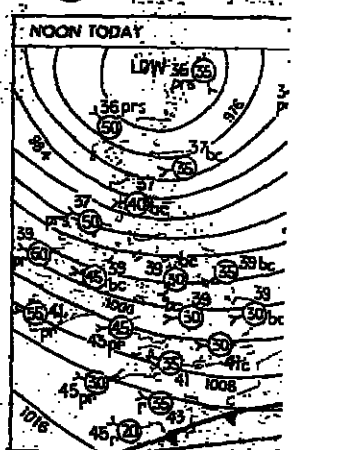
An intense and very deep depression N of Scotland moves steadily E.
Forecast for 5 am to midnight:
London, SE, central S England, East Angles, Midlands: Bright or sunny intervals, blustery showers, longer outbreaks of rain from W followed by further showers.
Wales, SW, strong or gale, perhaps severe gale at times in exposed places: max temp 7°C or 8°C (45°F or 46°F).
N Wales, NW, central N

England, Lake District: Isle of Man, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, N Ireland: Squally showers, heavy with hail and thunder and gusty at times, especially over high ground: wind W, gale or severe gale, increasing to storm at times; max temp 5°C (41°F) to 6°C (43°F).
E, NE England, Borders, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth: Squally showers, heavy with hail and thunder, windy at times with squalls; gusty intervals; wind W, gale or severe gale, perhaps storm at times in exposed places; max temp 4°C or 5°C (39°F to 41°F).

Outlook for tomorrow and Wednesday: Colder, with wintry showers, longer periods of sleet or snow in N and E Scotland; frost at night; very windy especially at first.
Sea passages: S North Sea, SW of Dover, English Channel (SE): Wind SW to W, moderate gale or gale, occasionally strong gale; sea very rough.
W of George's Channel, Irish Sea: Wind moderate, gale to strong gale, occasionally whole gale at first; sea very rough.

WEATHER REPORTS, YESTERDAY MIDDAY: C, cloud; S, fair; R, rain; S, sun; M, snow; L, thunder.

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip	Humid	Press
London	10	SW	100	0.1	75	1010
Edinburgh	8	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Glasgow	9	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Belfast	10	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Cardiff	11	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Birmingham	12	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Manchester	11	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Sheffield	10	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Leeds	9	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Nottingham	10	W	100	0.1	70	1010
London	10	SW	100	0.1	75	1010
Edinburgh	8	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Glasgow	9	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Belfast	10	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Cardiff	11	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Birmingham	12	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Manchester	11	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Sheffield	10	W	100	0.1	70	1010
Leeds	9	W	100	0.1	70	1010
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Hull: 4.20 am, 6.6m (21.7ft); 4.49 pm, 6.2m (20.2ft).

Journal 50

HOME NEWS

Seaspeed may be sold as part of joint hovercraft operation

By Michael Baily
Shipping Correspondent

British Rail's cross-Channel hovercraft subsidiary, Seaspeed, may be sold to private interests, it is being reported in the wake of the company's financial difficulties.

Seaspeed, the larger and more successful of the two, was set up for sale in the summer of 1978. The parent, British Rail, had run into financial difficulties caused by the shipping slump.

Market soundings soon showed that a combined Hoverlloyd-Seaspeed undertaking could be far more attractive to potential buyers than Hoverlloyd on its own.

British Rail, which had resisted approaches to merge Seaspeed with Hoverlloyd, is now believed to be not averse to adding a loss-making subsidiary, and the Government is thought to favour a more lively element of demerger.

Although Hoverlloyd has succeeded in making profits of over £1m in recent years, the a in oil prices has badly affected the fuel-intensive hovercraft and the general feeling that after building up traffic about 2,500,000 passengers a year, a third of the operators will find it more difficult to compete, particularly in

the face of the price war between the conventional ferries, which are more economical.

Some potential buyers have looked at Hoverlloyd on its own, but no offers have been made. Now at least three unidentified groups, not primarily shipping but with transport interests, are considering making a bid for Hoverlloyd and Seaspeed together.

Concentrating sailings mainly at Seaspeed's Dover terminal and maintenance mainly at Hoverlloyd's Ramsgate works would make possible gains of £1m or more a year from a combined operation, studies suggest.

Although Hoverlloyd has been the pacemaker in the past decade, Seaspeed, with its highly successful "Purcell" BHC Mountbatten, is catching up and would be doing even better were it not for the unreliable performance of the French M500 last season.

If the deal falls through, a possible outcome would be the breakup of Hoverlloyd and disposal of its fleet of Mountbattens abroad.

That would be strongly opposed by local interests, not least by Mr Jonathan Aitken, MP for Thanet East, who is understood to have made representations to Mr Norman Fowler, the Minister of Transport.

Fertilisers march on Downing Street

By Trevor Fishlock

The fertilisers of Britain marched on Downing Street yesterday to strike a blow for freedom and to save their craft from extinction.

"Freedom for Fertilisers", their banner said as, with their fertiliser gear on their shoulders, like rifles at the ready, they marched to No 10 from Parliament Square to present a petition to the Prime Minister.

"Perhaps", one of their leaders said hopefully, "We may have a sympathetic ear at No 10. We understand that Mrs Thatcher's son, Mark, has bought the gear and has gone in for a bit of fertilising himself."

Fertilising is argued for the art and craft of amateur metal detecting. Its practitioners may easily be identified as they shuffle over beach and heather, wearing capes and waving metal detectors.

In the four or five years since it started, the hobby has attracted about 200,000 adherents. The lure of treasure trove is, of course, at the heart of it, and although many people have found not much more than a fistful of old iron and sundry Edward VII pennies, some fervent "ferriers" have struck real crocks of gold.

Fertilisers, however, have some powerful enemies. Certain archaeologists and historians have strong misgivings about the spread of the hobby.

They feel that the expert amateurs with their GIS gadgets should not be allowed to trample on potentially valuable sites.

The anxieties of archaeologists in this matter are looked after in a section of the new Ancient Monuments Act. It is to come into force in the spring and prohibits the use of metal detectors on sites in the guardianship of the Department of the Environment or of local authorities.

For amateur metal detectors that is more than the wedge's thin end. That is why more than 400 of them marched yesterday to demand that "personal freedom to pursue a constructive and educational hobby is not denied."

Mr Tony Hammond, one of the organisers of Dig, the Detector Information Group, said: "The new Act has the laudable aim of protecting our heritage; but it is being used to restrict the peaceful activities of detector hobbyists."

Already local authorities are acting against us. Epping Forest is closed to us and soon we shall be outlawed in Kent and Sussex.

More than 100 metal detector clubs from all over the country joined the march.



The Skopelos Sky, a Greek-owned tanker carrying oil, breaking up after being flung on to rocks off Cornwall yesterday.

Ship breaks apart in Cornish cove

A ship broke in two yesterday after being flung by huge seas on to rocks in the Cornish cove where the BBC filmed the wreck scenes for *Poldark*.

Hundreds of people flocked to the hamlet of Portquin to see the stranded ship, the 2,774-ton Skopelos Sky. The Greek-owned vessel hit rocks at the base of 100ft cliffs.

She was the biggest victim of the storm which wrought its worst havoc over Devon and Cornwall. In her cargo were

2,000 drums of industrial oil, which coastguards hoped could be removed before more bad weather spilled them into the sea.

Hurricane-force winds caused the cargo to shift and drove the Skopelos Sky, with a 20 degree list, into Portquin Bay, which at its widest is two miles across. Nine of her crew were winched off by helicopters and then the skipper and five others fought for seven hours in a vain attempt to save her.

They were taken off, also by helicopter, less than 10 minutes before the vessel was flung on the rocks.

In the Channel an empty life raft was yesterday identified as from the French trawler *Africa* and an RAF Nimrod aircraft sighted wreckage. The trawler's

crew of five are feared lost in the storm.

The search for the 67ft fishing vessel, *Ocean Monarch*, and her crew of seven off Shetland was called off yesterday and she was presumed lost.

The Banff-registered boat made a routine radio contact early on Saturday and the last message from her was at 4.20 am, when she was 200 miles north-east of Aberdeen. She reported waves up to 50ft high.

In the biggest mass evacuation of a North Sea oil installation, 527 men were lifted by helicopter from the crane barge, *Hermud*, on Saturday as she drifted in rough seas after her anchors broke.

The *Hermud*, 50,000 tonnes, was stationed 110 miles north-east of Aberdeen, in the Texaco

Tartan oilfield, when gales caused four of her 12 anchor chains to fail.

Yesterday afternoon the *Hermud*, with some 80 men on board, reported it had regained power and was returning to the Tartan field.

The body of a crewman of the capsized trawler, *Petit Laurent*, was found off the coast, and nine other crewmen, as well as the trawler, *L'Ondine*, were still missing.

There was still no word of the trawler, *Karguen*, and its crew of five or six, which was due to return to port yesterday after fishing in the Irish Sea.

On land, at least 1,000 trees were blown down in Cornwall alone, with more than 2,000 properties damaged.

Two brothers die in house blaze

Two brothers died after a fire yesterday at their home near Mansfield, Nottinghamshire.

Michael Robinson, aged 12, and his brother Mark, aged five, were asleep upstairs when the fire was discovered about 3.30 am by their sister, Kim, aged 21, who was asleep in a downstairs room of the house in Queen Street, Kirby-in-Ashfield.

Poverty level for some separated wives

By Our Social Services Correspondent

The Government has stepped in to stop the incomes of some separated wives rising above the poverty level next year. It has changed the rules on how maintenance payments are treated for supplemented benefit purposes, saving an estimated £10m a year.

The change is disclosed today in *One Parent Times*, the journal of the National Council for One Parent Families, which disputes the Government's

figures. It points out that only 668 divorced mothers were known to be benefiting last June from the present rules, which allow maintenance paid to a child to be ignored in assessing the benefit for the mother and her other children.

Next year, when parts of the Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act, 1978, are expected to be implemented, several hundred separated wives would have benefited from the present rules. But the Government has

decided that maintenance paid to a child will count in full in assessing the family's benefit, ending a provision that enables fathers to raise their former family's total income above the poverty level.

The journal also says that trade unions, employers and the Government are ignoring the needs of working lone parents when their children are ill. It accuses Britain of having a "shameful and shabby" record compared with many European countries.

Plan to curb rates 'may hit the wrong targets'

Christopher Warman, local government correspondent

The Government's proposals to discourage local authorities from making excessive rate increases could hit the wrong targets, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities says today.

In its opposition to the financial provisions in the Local Government, Planning and Land Act, the association criticises the intention of the Government to reduce the grant payable to councils whose rate increase in 1980-81 exceeds the local uniform rate—an arbitrary figure set by the Department of the Environment—by a substantial, but so far unspecified, amount.

"That rate was high was no of judging whether a local authority was a big spender," says C. Taylor, chairman of the A.M.A., "the national uniform rate has been fixed at 11.9%, and Mr Taylor said there were A.M.A.

authorities whose rate poundage was already close to or above that, but whose spending compared favourably with that of other authorities below the 11.9% level."

Some member authorities have poundages of 130% or more and stand a very good chance of being hit by the penalty clause in this Bill whether they put their rates up or not.

As an example, the Association said that one member council had a rate poundage of 88.2% and a unit cost for secondary education of £597.12p a pupil—against another authority's figures of \$117.51p and £230.43p.

In setting their rates for 1980-81 local authorities would have a view on whether they were likely to be penalized and if so whether to rate for a possible loss of grant.

"If they decide to rate for any possible loss of grant, that in turn increases the risk that they will be penalized," Mr Taylor said.

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That would be strongly opposed by local interests, not least by Mr Jonathan Aitken, MP for Thanet East, who is understood to have made representations to Mr Norman Fowler, the Minister of Transport.

NHS to pay patient's £4,000 EEC surgery bill

By John Roper
Health Services Correspondent

A National Health Service patient has won a six-month battle to have a hip operation in a West German clinic at a cost to the NHS of £4,000.

Mr Pierre Gilles, aged 49, a manager from Fulham, west London, said yesterday that an operation he had in Britain as an NHS patient was not successful and left him with one leg shorter than the other. Surgeons told him that he would have to wait months for another operation.

German surgeons at Mainz, after an X-ray examination, said that the operation would be done within hours of his arrival at the clinic there. He would be in the hospital for three weeks. The cost is about twice that of a similar stay in a London teaching hospital.

Mr Gilles will go to the Mainz clinic next month. His first plea to the Department of Health and Social Security was refused.

The success of his appeal against that, he said, resulted largely from a little-known judgment of the European Court of Justice. His contention was that if a medical service was available in another EEC country, that availability was reason enough for the patient to be sent.

The judgment, in the *Pierit* case, was that a patient should be entitled to cash benefits provided by the competent institution in accordance with legislation which it administers.

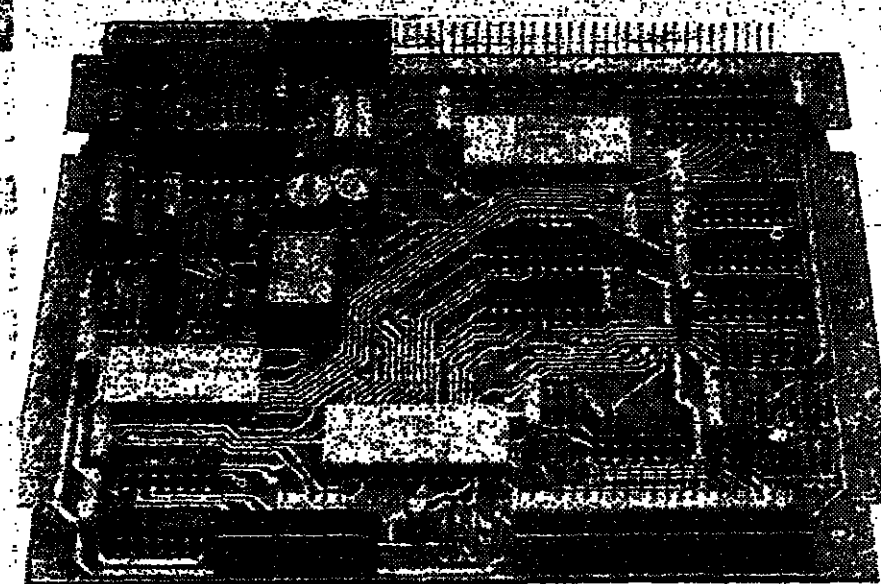
The judgment added: "However, by agreement between the competent institution and the institution of the place of stay such benefits may be provided by the latter institution on behalf of the former in accordance with the legislation of the competent state."

The DHSS does not discuss individual cases but an official said that there was provision for a patient to obtain treatment in another country in certain circumstances. Leaflet SA 28 explained the details.

The treatment sought must be available under the sickness insurance scheme of the country concerned and must be authorized by the department. There were probably only 20 to 30 such cases a year. "There must be very good reasons," he said.

The British Medical Association said that a consultant had to decide whether it was medically important that a patient should receive treatment in another country paid by the NHS.

A good reason would be treatment of a chest patient at a high altitude hospital, perhaps in Switzerland.



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HOME NEWS

Union rejects private fund-raising in schools

By Diana Geddes
Education Correspondent

Head teachers have been advised by their union not to support fund-raising schemes designed to provide books, equipment and other resources which have been lost to schools because of cuts in public spending.

A circular from Mr David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, to local secretaries representing two-thirds of all head teachers said that some heads were already under pressure to agree to schemes to raise money from parents and industry.

"Obviously they will make up their own minds on this subject. But as a national association, we should resist any move towards local education authority reliance on private fund-raising whose objective is the provision of those essentials which authorities have themselves provided in the past," Mr Hart said.

Such moves struck at the very root of maintained education. They would also create quite unacceptable and decisive differences between one school and another. Instead, association members should try to persuade local authorities not to damage basic school resources.

It was no good the Government seeking agreement on a national framework for what was taught in schools. The shortage of teachers in some vital subjects, together with government policies on education cuts, would make the achievement of a basic curriculum for all schools impossible, Mr Hart said.

Many local authorities believed that they could maintain standards by keeping all their full-time teachers, but sacking part-timers. That had led to a reduction in remedial education and put at risk specialist subjects in middle and secondary schools.

Compared with last year, 50 per cent more needed to be spent on books and basic classroom materials this year just to keep standards of provision at the same level as in 1972, Mr Hart said. No school could hope to do its proper job for pupils if it was short of text books.

Welsh hostel burnt

Another English-owned property in Wales, a chapel house used as a hostel at Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd, was burnt by extremists on Saturday. Earlier last week six holiday homes in Wales were destroyed.

Stephenson and St Boniface to lure overseas visitors Regional attractions for tourists

By Alan Hamilton

The English tourist industry has summoned the help of D. H. Lawrence, George Bernard Shaw, Sir Francis Drake, Amy Johnson and St Boniface to see it through what it expects to be the difficult year of 1980.

A combination of general world uncertainty and a weak dollar have led the salesmen of British tourism to forecast a levelling off in the growth in numbers and total spending of overseas visitors next year. Business has not been helped by wide publicity in the foreign press of the extortionate prices of some London hotel rooms, and the recent blot on the capital's escutcheon as an international gambling centre of the highest probability.

With no more jubilees until 2002 at the earliest, and no other important national celebrations or anniversaries to latch on to, the British Tourist Board and the English Tourist Board are reduced to banging the drum for a crop of regional attractions, besides continuing their more general exhortations to visit English gardens, eat English food, and meet the friendly British.

Next year's biggest single special attraction, apart from peregrinations like the Edinburgh Festival, is likely to be the 150th anniversary of the Rainhill engine trials in Liverpool, at which more than 200,000 spectators are expected for a

recreation of the successful test run of Stephenson's Rocket.

Plymouth is attempting to establish itself as the central tourist centre of the South-west with a 142-day festival commemorating the 400th anniversary of Drake's return from circumnavigating the globe. Besides a reconstruction of his arrival at Plymouth, the promised attractions include the world premiere of a new musical by a Broadway author.

In the East Midlands, a programme of events will commemorate the fifth anniversary of the death of D. H. Lawrence. The commercially astute Marquess of Bath is trading heavily on the 400th birthday of Longleat House in Wiltshire. Even Hull, normally omitted from the more hurried grand tours of Britain, is trying to elbow into the guide-books with celebrations to mark the fifth anniversary of the first solo female flight to Australia by Amy Johnson, who was born on Humberston Road but did not do a great deal of note in the area.

An attempt to capture the substantial German tourist market is being made at Crediton in Devon, where St Boniface, patron saint of Germany, was born in AD 680, and where there is to be a *son et lumiere* presentation of his life and the opening of a new museum.

But the main thrust of the tourist industry's effort abroad next year will be directed at correcting the impression that Britain is pricing itself out of the market.

Mr Alan Jefferson, marketing manager of the British Tourist Authority, said: "We are not cheap, particularly for North Americans, but there is good value to be found. Unfortunately we have had a very bad press overseas."

To help the authority sell its value-for-money campaign in 1980, a number of hoteliers in the Sussex Gardens area of London, known for its reasonable priced accommodation, have formed themselves into a consortium to sell their 2,000 rooms at a fixed price for next season, set at £11 for a double in the low season, and £16 in the high season.

The authority is hoping that more groups of hotels will come to similar arrangements, to make the marketing of budget-price holidays for foreign visitors easier. The authority points out that, apart from the proportion of overseas tourists coming on pre-booked package holidays has fallen to less than a quarter.

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Census question on race backed by researchers

By Pat Healy
Social Services Correspondent

Questions on race and colour must be included in the 1981 census if reliable information about the housing, education and job prospects of racial minorities is to be obtained, the Social Research Association says in a statement today.

The association, a professional body drawn from the universities, central and local government and independent research institutes, points out that blacks in the United States have campaigned successfully against the argument that official recognition of race or colour preserves these labels at social categories. Their success has enabled them to show the persistent relationship between race and inequality, the association says.

It is not surprising that in the atmosphere of mistrust and uncertainty created by recent legislation many people fear what the authorities will do with further information, the association says. "The answer is for the census to conform to standard survey practice where, by names and addresses are

repeated from the questionnaires and subsequently destroyed."

Technical arguments against including colour and race questions in the census arise from the fact that pre-test questions have confused race with colour, the association says. What is needed is a simple question on self-assessed colour and the retention of the 1971 census question on birthplace.

"It will be easier to 'blame the victim' if reliable information is not available on the relationship between race and the real culprit, lack of jobs, poor housing and the persistence of discrimination."

Other specific surveys would be hampered if the census did not include race questions. The census must provide information on whether racial minorities are escaping from inner city areas, whether their housing standards relative to the white population are improving, whether unemployment among young blacks continues to be disproportionately high and whether racial minorities are continuing to be concentrated in poorer paid jobs.

Army finds way to stable private's horse

A regulation framed some time between the Battle of Waterloo and the Crimean War has enabled the Army to provide a stable for Private Belinda Porter's horse.

Private Porter, aged 19, of the Women's Royal Army Corps, saved her pay to buy Mr Merango, a four-year-old grey gelding, for £500. She planned to train it for long-distance endurance rides.

Private Porter, whose home is at Thornton, near Blackpool, said: "I was in a panic and worried because I thought I might have to give him up."

She went to Major William Smith, aged 50, York garrison quartermaster.

Major Smith called in the School of Ordnance, near Camberley, Surrey, where army regulations are drawn up and old regulations are preserved. The school found a 140-year-old rule that the Army is obliged to provide stabling for horses belonging either to soldiers or other ranks.

Now the Army is repairing the roof of an old stable block at Imperial Barracks, York, for Mr Merango.

WEST EUROPE

Italy puts anti-terror expert in north and stiffens penalties

From Peter Nichols
Rome, Dec 16

Unexpectedly strong measures against terrorism in the north of Italy have been announced by the Government. The measures are aimed at stiffening penalties and putting an expert in the north.

Mr Aldo Moro, Minister of the Interior, said: "We are not cheap, particularly for North Americans, but there is good value to be found. Unfortunately we have had a very bad press overseas."

To help the authority sell its value-for-money campaign in 1980, a number of hoteliers in the Sussex Gardens area of London, known for its reasonable priced accommodation, have formed themselves into a consortium to sell their 2,000 rooms at a fixed price for next season, set at £11 for a double in the low season, and £16 in the high season.

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He is estimated to have at his disposal some 25,000 men, distributed throughout 33 provinces and the greater part of the tracked vehicles and helicopters in use by the carabinieri.

New prefects have been appointed for Genoa, Milan and Turin. General Della Chiesa is already known from his work at the head of a special anti-terrorist squad, as the most powerful opponent of the terrorist Red Brigades.

Signor Cossiga decided not to make parliamentary approval of the anti-terrorist measures a question of confidence in order, presumably, to dampen the political quarrels implicit in them. The strengthening of the fight against the terrorists, whose numbers including supporters and sympathisers are given this weekend by an anonymous security source as 100,000, requires a decisive Government.

The Communists maintain that in the face of a national emergency they must finally be brought into the Government. Some Christian Democrats are once again thinking in terms of a programme of action agreed with the Communists and Signor Cossiga himself is by nature a seeker of agreed opinion.

But that is a long way from giving ministers a majority in the Government to assure its continued strength, to more conservative reasoning that the Government's survival may be the last chance to save the country's democratic regime.

Publication tomorrow of the decree-law makes the measures immediately operative. Parliament will then have to approve them within three months.

The Government has provided for life imprisonment without the chance of parole for terrorist killings and for the murder of judges or members of the police forces. Penalties for wounding are doubled if the crime is committed by terrorists, and there are general increases as well for other crimes committed by terrorists.

The Government has reorganised its forces involved in anti-terrorist operations in the particularly prone provinces of the north. The redoubtable General Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa has been given command of the Milan division of carabinieri with responsibilities covering the north.



Mr Joergensen: Three unpopular options.

Defeat faces Danish Government

From Our Correspondent
Copenhagen, Dec 16

Elections in Denmark in the New Year became a possibility today after failure to resolve the stalemate in negotiations between Mr Anker Joergensen's Social Democratic minority Government and other political parties on an economic austerity package.

Agreement will have to be reached by tomorrow, the latest if the package is to be passed by Parliament before the Christmas recess.

Mr Joergensen's main difficulty is securing majority support in Parliament for his controversial plan to introduce economic democracy in the form of a compulsory profit-sharing scheme for workers in limited companies, to be introduced in 1981, and the setting up of a central workers-controlled investment fund.

The economic democracy measures are tied to other measures, including increased taxation on company boards, and an extension until February 1981 of the present price and incomes freeze.

To date, both Mr Joergensen and the unions have been adamant that the package must be passed as a whole. The economic democracy measures are the price the trade union federation has exacted from the Government for support for its stringent income policy.

The prices and incomes freeze, imposed after the Social Democrats' victory in the October general elections, expired next month. The Government has been accused of changing its heart by the centrist parties, Mr Joergensen will have three choices: call unpopular elections in January; hand over power to the rightist opposition; or introduce economic democracy measures from the austerity package.

De Gaulle museum

Paris, Dec 16—La Boissière, the home of General de Gaulle at Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, is opening as a museum from this week. It will house a permanent display of memorabilia of the General's life.

European space launcher fails to lift off

From Our Own Correspondent
Paris, Dec 16

At 1430 hours and 3.4 seconds GMT yesterday the European space launcher Ariane failed to get off the ground. President Mitterrand was among the millions of French television viewers watching the direct transmission from Kourou, French Guiana, of this embarrassing setback to European space hopes.

The launch engines ignited, then the 50-tonne high rocket almost disappeared in a cloud of smoke. As the smoke cleared the silver rocket reappeared, firmly anchored to the ground by a strong set of British-made jaws.

The launcher now has to be inspected in detail before the trial launch can be rescheduled.

French assembly approves new deal for farming

From Ian Murray
Paris, Dec 16

Two years to the day after President Giscard d'Estaing's speech calling for a "green oil" of France a bill has been passed by the National Assembly to further its development.

The President's idea was that as farm produce was France's only really valuable raw material, the country had to switch from a farm to a food policy in order to improve output. The new law is agricultural orientation, as it is known, seeks to provide the means for a more streamlined food production.

The bill attracted no less than 600 amendments before it was finally passed last night by the combined votes of the Gaullists and Giscardians against the combined votes of the Socialists and Communists. The traditional political divisions were reestablished.

During the debate M. Pierre Méhaignerie, the Minister of Agriculture, said there was no alternative to the new policies. France was the third largest exporter of agricultural products. This year it had a European Community subsidy of 15,000 francs (£1,450m).

"The obligation to export obliges us to fight for a higher productivity level," he said. The new law would therefore provide financial aid, reform the National Institute of Agricultural Research, stabilise agricultural products, help

EEC pledge to clear way for Spain's membership

From Michael Horsely
Brussels, Dec 16

Spain's Prime Minister, Adolfo Suárez, has been given a promise by the European Commission that it will try to revive the flagging momentum of negotiations on Spain's application to join the EEC.

At a meeting in Brussels last Friday and Saturday, Mr Suárez and Mr Jenkins, the President of the Commission, agreed that it was both possible and desirable to break the back of negotiations by the end of next year.

That would then open the way for signature of an accession treaty during the first half of 1981, with actual entry to the EEC taking place on January 1, 1982, after allowing months for parliamentary ratification in Spain and the accession of member states (which then will include Greece).

The Commission is not, of course, in a position to make commitments on behalf of member states. Nonetheless, Mr Suárez said he was pleased with the assurances. Mr Jenkins and other senior commissioners.

The Spanish Government, which has hailed its formal policy colours firmly to the EEC, has a political and psychological need to show domestic opinion that progress is being made in its entry negotiations. Madrid has been dismayed at the foot-dragging of some member states.

Spain applied for membership of the EEC on July 19, 1977, but negotiations with it were formally opened only in February of this year after Commission had presented constitutionally required opinion on Spanish entry.

Although favourable to Spain's membership, the Commission drew attention to the difficult economic adjustments that would be required of Spain and the Community, recommended that Spain's economic integration should be phased over a 10-year transitional period after entry.

The negotiations have a not got much beyond preparatory exchanges of views. Although the Commission has put forward proposals bringing Spanish industry into the EEC, Mr Suárez said that proposals on agriculture, one of the main areas of difficulty, would be submitted in the first half of next year.

Only when the positions both sides have been fully clarified by the Commission Spanish officials will direct negotiations between Spain and the EEC's Council of Ministers in earnest. That is until before the second half of a year.

In agriculture, which occupies 20 per cent of the Spanish force, Spain's main Mediterranean products (wine, oil and citrus fruits) will compete fiercely with the produce of France and Italy.

The EEC's farmers' organisation has demanded that Spain should produce the EEC market and full integration into the system farm price support should be phased over 15 years.

On the industrial front, Spain's most important industries—textiles, steel, shipbuilding and fishing—will inevitably add to the surpluses and unemployment already plaguing these sectors in the Community of Europe.

At the same time, Spanish industry has developed behind protective barriers, prolonged negotiating struggles in prospect with the EEC pressing for rapid removal of barriers to its industrial ports and the Spanish equally rapid integration into the Common Agricultural Policy.

Portuguese go to the polls for local elections

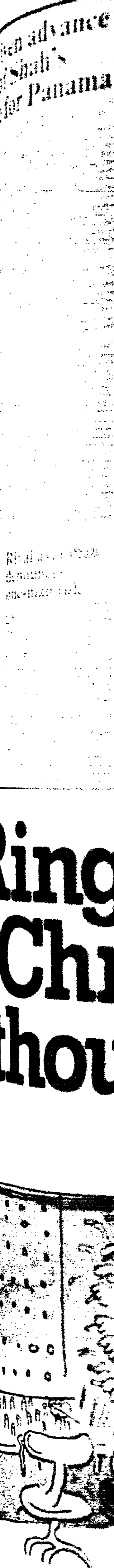
From Our Correspondent
Lisbon, Dec 16

Portugal's voters went to the polls today for the second time in a fortnight, this time to elect members of the municipal councils, and municipal and parish assemblies.

The councils and assemblies deal with all administrative matters concerning local voting and progress. The parliamentary election last night showed a swing to the right.

French quintuplets

Besacoen, Dec 16—Quintuplets—three boys and two girls—were born here during the night of December 16. The mother, a 26-year-old woman, was 16 weeks pregnant.



BARCLAYS BANK OPENS A FULL BRANCH IN BUENOS AIRES TO HELP YOUR COMPANY INTO ARGENTINA

Barclays Bank International now has a full branch in Buenos Aires.

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OVERSEAS

Tehran given advance warning of Shah's departure for Panama

By Robert Fisk
Iran, Dec 16

The Iranian authorities were aware of the American Embassy's plan to fly the deposed Shah to Panama at least two days before he left the United States last night. Details of his departure were passed on to the Embassy by three Western sources in Tehran, at the request of the United States.

Although no diplomatic mission here will comment on the matter, the British Embassy in Tehran has said that the Iranian Foreign Ministry had been told that the Shah was to leave for Panama.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard, which had long ago said that the Americans did not extradite the Shah, appears to have concluded that this step was viable. As a result, there is a growing official silence in Tehran today.

It might be an indication to describe this as a collision between the American and Iranian governments. It is nevertheless a new and potentially full direction in the course of their relations.

Sadeq Qotbzadeh, the Iranian Minister at a press conference in Tehran tonight, said the Shah's journey to Panama was "the first victory" in the struggle of "a people" to "defuse the crisis".

View of this, an announcement today by the students saying that they would go to the American Embassy with spy trials for the 50

ambassadors need not be regarded as ominous as it sounds. It is still unclear how much advance notice was given to Ayatollah Khomeini but two Iranian Foreign Ministers have already said their jobs because they failed to keep the Iranian fully informed on government policy and Mr Qotbzadeh, the present holder of the post, is unlikely to have repeated their mistake. It seems likely, therefore, that the Ayatollah was indeed given some idea of the Shah's movements. By early this evening, he had made no comment.

It is equally obvious, however, that the students were given no advance warning that the Shah was leaving the United States. The students' committee, which usually defines their policy towards the hostages, was at first too stunned to give any reaction.

This afternoon, however, they issued a statement in which they threatened to pursue their trial for spying. The full flavour of their somewhat portentous "communiqué" is best conveyed in the following extract from their statement.

"In order to free itself from its great political deadlock and to fulfil its national duty, the United States has embarked on a futile effort and has sent the criminal Mohamed Reza to Panama. We hereby announce that to reveal the treacherous plots by the criminal United States and to punish it, the spy hostages will be tried."

Qom, Dec 16.—Ayatollah Shariat-Madari, Iran's second most influential religious leader, has accused the drafters of the new Islamic constitution of handing over national sovereignty to one man.

Referring in an interview to the election last August of a clergy-dominated council of experts to review the constitution, he said the nation had wanted the council "to exercise its own powers and not to give itself from power and give it to someone else."

He said article 110 of the constitution, approved in a referendum earlier this month, was against national sovereignty. The article gives Ayatollah Khomeini sweeping judicial and executive powers. —Reuter.

Court tells Iran to release all hostages

From Robert Schull
Amsterdam, Dec 16

The International Court of Justice in The Hague has ordered Iran to release immediately all the American hostages being held in that country and to restore the embassy in Tehran to exclusive United States control.

The fifteen judges of the court were unanimous in their decision.

Iran, which did not attend, was also told that it should give the American diplomats "immunity from any form of criminal jurisdiction and facilities to leave Iran."

America had asked for provisional measures pending final judgment in the case. It wants the court to rule that Iran has violated international law in "tolerating, encouraging and failing to prevent and punish" those who have seized the hostages.

The court also ordered both the United States and Iran to refrain from any action which could aggravate the tension between the two countries or render a solution of the dispute more difficult.

It rejected Iran's contention that it should not consider the case because the holding of the hostages was "a marginal and secondary aspect of an overall problem."

Mr Sadeq Qotbzadeh, the Iranian Foreign Minister, had stated that the court could not examine the American application divorced from its proper context described as "all the crimes perpetrated in Iran by the American Government."

But according to the court "if the Iranian Government considers the alleged activities of the United States legally to have a close connection with the subject matter" it remains open to that government to present its own arguments to the court regarding those activities.

The court said: "The institution of diplomacy with its concomitant privileges and immunities has withstood the test of centuries and proved to be an instrument essential for effective cooperation in the international community."

Larsen wins chess cup
Buenos Aires, Dec 16.—Bent Larsen, the Danish grandmaster, won the Clarin Cup chess tournament here with a three-point lead over his closest competitors.



Lord Soames making his first informal contacts with Rhodesians after a church service

Salisbury politicians expect accord

From Nicholas Ashford
Salisbury, Dec 16

In spite of the renewed deadlock in the London talks over ceasefire arrangements in Southern Rhodesia, there is widespread confidence in political circles here that the Patriotic Front will agree to the British proposals.

Dr Silas Mundawara, the former Deputy Prime Minister who led the Salisbury delegation in the last days of the Lancaster House talks, said on his return here today that he was confident the Patriotic Front would "eventually come in."

However, he expressed doubts over whether the Patriotic Front really wanted a peaceful and democratic solution or intended to impose through war and intimidation, "refabricated governmental structures based on foreign ideologies."

Mr Christopher Sakala, a spokesman for Bishop Abel Muzorewa's United African National Council, accused the Patriotic Front of repeating its delaying tactics and said: "In the final analysis it will sign."

Mr Dennis Divaris, a senior member of the Rhodesian Front Party, said the Patriotic Front would sign when it had infiltrated enough of its guerrillas into the country to influence the way people vote in the rural areas.

The belief that the Patriotic Front will not allow itself to be left out of a final agreement was reinforced by the announcement that the United States was to end sanctions against Southern Rhodesia at midnight tonight. This will greatly

increase the pressures on the Patriotic Front and its backers, the "front line" states, to participate in a settlement.

Meanwhile, it has been learnt that the UANC is to put whites up as candidates for the 20 white seats in the proposed 100-seat Parliament. The names of the candidates will be announced shortly. In terms of the Constitution agreed at Lancaster House, black parties can put up white candidates for the 20 seats elected by white, coloured and Asian voters, and white parties can put up black candidates for the 80 seats elected by black voters.

The aim of the UANC is to try to prevent the Rhodesian Front from gaining all 20 white seats, as seems likely at present. The Rhodesian Front has published a series of revised principles and policies drawn up by a five-member committee headed by Mr Rowan Cronje, former Deputy Minister of Land and Rural Development.

The document attempts to change the party's racial image while committing it to the preservation of a strong and prosperous democratic sovereign state opposed to communism.

Mr Ian Smith, the party's leader, said it had been "realistic enough to accept change and adapt ourselves. We do not believe changes mean we have to accept surrender and collapse as far as the white man is concerned."

"Communist victory": Mr Smith, commenting on the outcome of the Lancaster House conference, said: "In the last 20 years, the Communists have been trying in vain to destroy Rhodesia, but with the connivance of Lord Carrington and the British Foreign Office, they have succeeded. It is a victory for Communism." —Agence France-Presse.

Zambia hopeful: President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia indicated today that he thought a peaceful solution could be reached in Southern Rhodesia.

Addressing a political conference in Lusaka, he said: "I am delighted to open this conference at a time when I can see hope for Zimbabwe after 14 years of protracted war." —Reuter.

US lifts sanctions: President Carter yesterday bowed to pressure from Congress and London and decreed the ending of sanctions against Southern Rhodesia. The decision comes into effect at midnight tonight, (our Washington correspondent writes).

The British had strongly urged the Americans to lift sanctions, now that the 11th lateral Declaration of Independence has been abandoned.

Britain criticized: Mr Blaise Rabezafika, chairman of the African Group at the United Nations, denounced Britain's lifting of sanctions against Southern Rhodesia as "completely unacceptable and illegal" without approval from the Security Council. —Reuter.

Leading article, page 13

Correction
Owing to an error in transmission it was incorrectly stated in Saturday's newspaper that more than 100 people were understood to be awaiting execution in Southern Rhodesia. This figure should be 10.

Israel balks at transfer of power to Arabs

From Our Correspondent
Tel Aviv, Dec 16

On the eve of negotiations on the powers to be given to the proposed autonomous council for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Dr Yosef Burg, the chief Israeli negotiator, rejected the suggestion made by Dr Mustapha Khalil, his Egyptian counterpart, that all the powers held by the Israelis should be transferred.

"Not all the powers of the military Government will be transferred and those powers to be transferred will not be transferred automatically," Dr Burg said in a radio interview tonight. The powers and responsibilities would be decided by the negotiations, he said.

Dr Burg added, however, that the proposed council could fully control matters that were not problematical. Other questions, such as water resources, would have to be controlled jointly with Israel. As for security, Dr Burg said that "nobody can be a partner because it is our life."

Saudi arms deal: The Israeli Cabinet today reviewed recent developments in the Middle East, including events in Iran and a report of a big American arms sale to Saudi Arabia. The session was highly secret and no details have been disclosed.

Officials have expressed concern at a reported announcement today by Prince Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz, the Saudi Defence and Aviation Minister, that Saudi Arabia had concluded a \$600 million arms deal with the United States.

The deal is reported to include 6,500 rockets and bombs for Saudi Arabia's 114 F5 fighter-bombers, 660 air-to-air Sidewinder missiles and 916 air-to-surface missiles. —Reuter.

Visions find an 'Agatha Christie' murderer

From Patrick Brogan
Washington, Dec 16

A particularly gruesome murder has been uncovered in North Carolina, in circumstances very similar to Agatha Christie's last novel, *Sleeping Murderer*. In the book, a woman returns to her childhood home, where events trigger memories long-suppressed of the time when she saw the murdered body of her mother.

In the North Carolina case, Mrs Annie Perry recently started having "visions" of the time her father disappeared in April, 1944. She was then 10. She told the police last week that "on Easter morning she saw her mother in the kitchen and the sink full of pots and pans of bloody water."

Later that day she saw her father's body almost naked in an unused room. During the night she heard "butchered sounds."

The family lived on a farm, and had an outside privy. In the following week when it was the privy she looked down the hole and saw her father's face floating.

Her mother, Mrs William Cameron, reported her husband missing, and in due course obtained a divorce, on grounds of desertion.

When the daughter recently began to have "visions" she went to a psychiatrist who sent her to the police.

They took the matter seriously enough to obtain a search warrant. She took them to the site of the privy, where they dug and found human bones.

On Friday afternoon a police found Mrs Cameron. She had shot herself, leaving a suicide note in which she confessed to the murder of her husband.

Dresden Tintoretto 'bought for four bottles of vodka'

From Moshe Brilliant
Tel Aviv, Dec 16

The Tintoretto painting missing from the Dresden Museum since 1945, which an Israeli art dealer allegedly tried to sell in New York last week for \$120,000, had been acquired for four bottles of vodka, a Tel Aviv newspaper reported today.

A Jew from the Soviet Republic of Georgia, obtained it from a former Red Army soldier and Soviet customs examiners did not recognize its value when it took it with him while emigrating three years ago, according to Yediot Aharnoth.

The newspaper gave its source vaguely as friends of Mr Raymond Vinokur, the art dealer who bought the work from the immigrant and was arrested when he offered to sell it to an undercover agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr Vinokur was also an immigrant from the Soviet Union. Police headquarters in Jerusalem said that Interpol had reported that the man had no criminal record. The police here had not been requested to investigate and have not searched for Mr Joseph Silberman, named by Mr Vinokur as the supplier of the painting, according to press reports from New York.

Ring away merrily this Christmas, but spare a thought for the operator.

With Cheap Rate again on Christmas Day and Boxing Day (Christmas Day and New Year's Day in Scotland) for all inland calls, why not ring all your furthest and dearest with seasonal greetings?

But, please, bear one thing in mind.

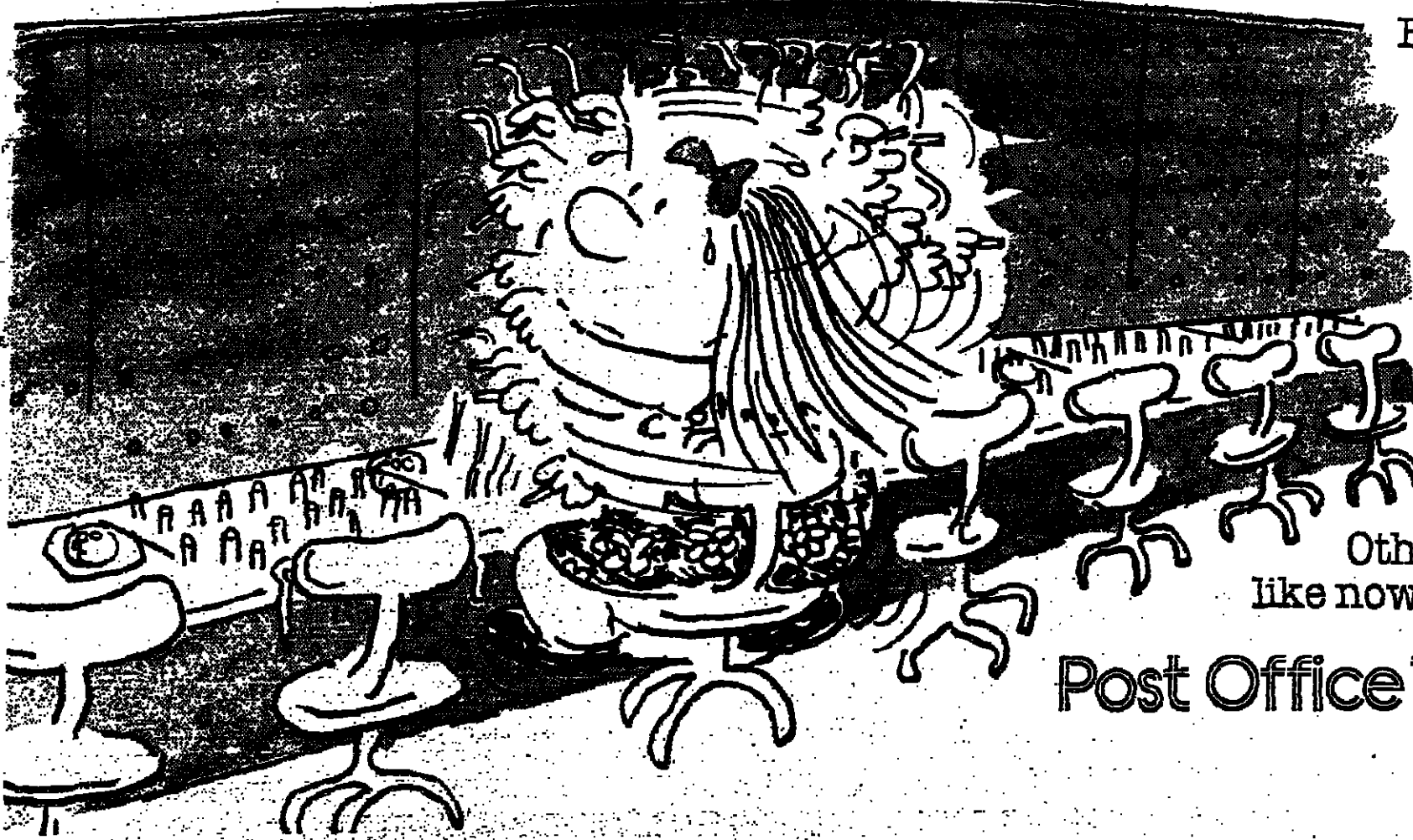
Many of our operators will be celebrating with their families, too.

So on Christmas Day (New Year's Day in Scotland) operators will deal only with 999 calls and others such as radiophone calls which cannot normally be dialled.

There will be no Directory Enquiry service but, of course, in cases of real distress operators will help with any type of call or enquiry.

Otherwise you can jingle bells as much as you like now the whole country's on STD.

Post Office Telecommunications



OVERSEAS

PLO leaders killed in Cyprus ambush given Beirut honours

Nicosia, Dec 16.—The bodies of two senior Palestinian Liberation Organisation officials killed in an ambush here yesterday were flown to Beirut today on a scheduled flight of Cyprus Airways.

The two men were Ali Salem Ahmed, also known as Ali Samir, second secretary of the PLO diplomatic mission in Cyprus, and Ibrahim Abdul Aziz, codenamed Abu Safwat, who, according to PLO sources here, was in charge of sabotage operations on the West Bank.

Both men were shot at point blank range and the assassins, who, police said, had used silencers on their weapons, escaped in a hired car. Police have a description of one of the men.

A police checkpoint less than 100 yards from the shooting had heard nothing, and the first indication of the incident was when Mrs Samir's Greek Cypriot wife, Kyproulla, started to scream for help.

Mr Safwat was said to be on a special mission as the personal envoy of Mr Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader.

Dr Vassos Lyssarides, leader of the pro-Palestinian Greek Cypriot Socialist Party, Edeak, in a statement published in his own daily newspaper *Ta Nea*, demanded the "immediate closure" of the Israeli Embassy claiming that the identity of the killers was obvious.

He said: "We have, long ago, reported to the Govern-

ment and condemned the activities of Israeli agents in Cyprus. Now they have started to murder members of the diplomatic corps and there can be no further tolerance.

"We demand the immediate closure of the Israeli Embassy here as this horrible crime is directed not only against the brotherly Palestinian people but also against Cyprus."

At present two Palestinians are serving life sentences in Nicosia's top security prison, for the murder in February, 1978, of Yusuf al-Sibai, editor of the Cairo newspaper *Al-Ahram* and a close personal friend of President Sadat.

In Beirut the bodies were met at the international airport by a silent parade of senior Palestinian officers and hundreds of guerrillas clad in their battle dress.

The guerrillas draped the coffins in the black, white and green Palestinian flag before driving them to Beirut in two ambulances. Mourners followed in a car procession to the city.

An official statement from the public information office said Mr George Pelegias, the director general of the Cyprus Foreign Ministry, flew to Beirut with the coffins accompanied by Mr Zakaria Abdul Rachim, the PLO representative here.

Mr Pelegias called on Mr Arafat and conveyed the personal condolences of President Kyprianou, the statement added.—UPI.

Defectors say Vietnam is running Kampuchea

From Xavier Baron, of Agence France-Presse, Sok Sahn, Kampuchea, Dec 16

"I worked for several months in the administration of Mr Heng Samrin to find out what the Vietnamese really want to do in Kampuchea. I became convinced that they want to conquer the country. Then I left."

Mr Heng Samrin, who is 50 and was bank president until the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975, explained why he decided to leave Mr Heng Samrin's pro-Vietnamese regime in Phnom Penh to join the Khmer Rouge's National Liberation Front here in the Cardamom mountains.

Like other former Kampuchean officials and intellectuals, he welcomed the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime in January. Under it he had been part of a "pedalling" team powering the irrigation system on the shores of the Tonle Sap. When he returned to Phnom Penh the Vietnamese called on his administrative talents.

"I was put in charge of food distribution to the 50,000 inhabitants of the Prek Leap district near Phnom Penh," he said. "I soon realised that it was not the Cambodian district leader who made the final decisions, but his Vietnamese 'counsellor' who was none other than the head of the local battalion."

The counsellor regularly reduced the amount of rice he requested. "In reality only members of the administration had the right to a regular ration: 26 lb a month which took the place of a salary and was used in barter."

In July, Mr Kunthou was summoned to Phnom Penh to reorganise the banking system. He ignored the invitation, not wanting to continue in the service of the Vietnamese, and left Phnom Penh in September.

A similar story is told by the former medical head of the Battambang Hospital in western Kampuchea who recently arrived in Sok Sahn.

He was invited early in the year to take charge of the hospital in Kamoucha's second city, but he said "at the end of three months a Vietnamese counsellor arrived who was not even a doctor."

The attitude of the Vietnamese became increasingly unbearable. "They got hold of medical supplies dating back to 1975 and gave them to the hospital and sent me away, saying they were a gift from the Vietnamese people. But some of them still bore the words: 'Made in Kampuchea'."

A few weeks ago Mr Kang Samrat, the vice-president of the Vietnamese-supported regime's autonomous committee for Phnom Penh, arrived in Thailand.

The number of defections is impossible to determine, because Kampuchean leaving the Phnom Penh administration, those autonomous committees, hundreds of thousands of refugees along the country's border with Thailand, or join an anti-Vietnamese resistance group.

According to the Khmer National Liberation Front, which is led by Mr Son Sann, a former Kampuchean Prime Minister, 13 senior officials have joined the movement in recent weeks — engineers, administrators, professors, a captain and a doctor.

There is a real chance that British heavy industry is about to produce a remarkable success story on the grand scale after a recent slump and despondency from British Shipbuilders, British Leyland and British Steel. The oldest industry of them all, the one which originally made the others possible, has quietly begun a revival.

Coal is coming back to the "traditional" industries — it is difficult to imagine an atmosphere in which British managers and British union leaders vie with each other for the honour of being the more bullish about the future and in which both parties look forward not to decades but to three centuries of prosperity and success. At the moment, however, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) leads the National Coal Board (NCB) by a length in optimism over the future of coal.

Naturally both organisations know which side their bread is buttered, and there is doubtless an element of wish-fulfilment in their relatively new-found high spirits. They also tend to play down complaints from their principal customers about prices, quality and availability.

Yet fresh evidence of a measurable upswing in the fortunes of coal is accumulating all the time, even if it is too early to conclude that a generation of decline has made way for a permanent expansion. If these recent improvements in performance can be maintained and built upon, the current financial year, the medium-term one must conclude, will be the industry's best to date.

The second indicator is a term which includes absenteeism but also non-appearance at work because of injury, illness, and all other causes. It was down 1.8 per cent at 14.7 per cent in the first 35 weeks of this year as compared with the same period last year. This trend is also reflected in the third indicator.

The third is recruitment. In the first 35 weeks of the last financial year there was a net loss of 7,069 men. This time there was a net gain of 423 men even before the early retirement scheme for miners has only recently come into full operation.

This scheme has contributed to an encouraging fall in the average age of the workforce, from 40.4 to 39.5 years. The industry's safety record is also improving, with the overall accident rate reaching an all-time low in the financial year 1978-9.

The NCB's cost profile is also in good health. (£112m in 1978-9 compared with £109m the year before). Only the severe weather and industrial disputes outside the industry prevented the achievement of a financial year of £109m; there was instead an overall loss of £10m.

But the coal industry is still far from being self-financing. In order to modernise and adapt itself to a vast reconstruction programme requiring an investment this financial year of some £600m (compared with £454m last year and £344m the year before). The board is putting up between 20 and 30 per cent of this and the taxpayer the rest.

The money is going on new collieries, new techniques and new applications. Sir Derek Ezra, chairman of the NCB, feels very strongly that the industry is not getting the considerable credit he believes is its due. Indeed if he were not such a mild-mannered man one might describe his feelings on the subject as passionate.

"We are creating a new industry," he said. "We are carrying out one of the most extensive exercises of industrial rejuvenation in history." The NUM has been pleasantly surprised by the relative reticence of Sir Derek's recent public utterances on the importance and claim to priority of the coal industry.

The NCB believes the industry, now producing about 120 million tonnes of coal a year, can comfortably look forward to selling 150 million tonnes by the end of the present revival programme agreed by Government, management and unions originally for the period up to 1985 but since extended to 2000. It could, they feel, easily be more. This is where the NUM outdoes the board: it believes that by the end of the century there will be a market for coal of 200 million tonnes a year (which is still considerably less than what was being produced as recently as 20 years ago).

To acquire some idea of how the industry is moving into the future, I visited Roydon Drift colliery near Barnsley, South Yorkshire, freely conceded by all concerned to be a showplace among Britain's 221 active collieries.

It is sufficiently eerie for a pampered city-dweller to find himself crawling on all fours through a hole in a coal seam 165 metres long (the NCB went metric some time ago), about 75 cm high and 1.5 metres wide, which he knows will be allowed to cave in later the same day.

The experience becomes positively surreal when you meet a miner crawling (much faster) in the opposite direction who wishes you an elaborate "Good morning" as if you were passing each other in a rather more spacious corridors of a Pall Mall club. It is heartily humbling to discover afterwards that he probably makes that journey at least a dozen times a day, five days a week.

The extraction process at Roydon is so simple that even the least technically-minded visitor can grasp at once what is going on. It is based on "retreat mining" and a new and apparently insatiable coal-cutting technique which mechanises everything from the coalface to delivery at the surface.

In the old days, the economics were different. The great initial investment in digging vertical shafts made it essential to produce much of the best coal as possible at the surface, as soon as practicable, and the result that, as the pits went deeper, some soft low-grade coal had to be mined and sent away from the shaft.

At Roydon this procedure has been reversed. One of the three shafts of "lateral drifting" which are obvious once they are seen, is a horizontal tunnel which has been driven into the seam. Then you drive two minutes on either side of the entire length of it and install the latest coal-cutter at the far end. At Roydon it is a German machine which produces a similar system.

When the cutter has proceeded to work backwards a shuttle in a lorry, across the conveniently broad seam, allowing the earliest workings to collapse as the cutter chews its way to the near end of the seam. The savings in money and time, and the enormous reduction in the risk of a gas explosion, are obvious. In some of the pits in the North East which go out under the North Sea, the distance from pithead to coalface is so enormous that a faceworker spends only three hours per shift before he has to be replaced by another. The rest of his time is spent getting to and from the coal.

Lateral drifting at Roydon has been encouraged by the fact that the coal seam is, at the currently exploited coalface, only 9.2 metres below the surface. It is a drift mine, which is to say you approach the coal at a gentle slope from the side, laterally, rather than through an expensive shaft vertically. This means that extraction is much easier and cheaper and can be done by means of a simple conveyor belt.

I was taken to the face by Mr Chris Round, an ebullient colliery manager, whose physique does not belie his surname. When I went down a coalmine last year, I had to breathe very deeply to be able to smell coal at all. It was a noticeable improvement on the London Underground.

"Even if you are dressed exactly as they are and have become as filthy as they are, the professionals instantly recognise an ignorant tourist (probably because he is busy gawping at the sight of a man carrying himself with the cable from the battery on his hip to the lamp on his head) and push you gently but firmly back as the sweeper, coal-cutting head suddenly chews its way across your path and stops."

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In theory, therefore, a miner in an old colliery where productivity is much lower than at Roydon for historical and technical reasons is not at a disadvantage compared with his colleagues in the new generation of "superpits". But it seems clear that if the latest machines function at full capacity for long periods without a hitch, and if the faceworkers are in a record-breaking mood, they can perhaps double their earnings in a good week without overtaxing themselves.

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Small wonder that 43 countries have sent delegations to Britain to look at the industry. Britain has now to think the right balance between the vast advantages of her coal reserves and the environmental considerations which are the principal restraint upon their exploitation. Thus the current Vale of Belvoir planning inquiry is crucial for the future of coal.

Dan van der Vat

Prisoners of conscience



Colombia: Dr Bolanos Mejia

By Clifford Longley

Dr German Bolanos Mejia was arrested last May in Colombia, after this house had been searched and books and papers confiscated by the authorities.

He is detained in the prison, at Manizales, Caldas, according to information reaching Amnesty International in London, and is accused of "having created a medicine cooperative with persons considered to be members of subversive groups, and having provided medical attention to alleged members of guerrilla movements."

He had been working among peasants in the Colombian countryside near Neira and Quinchia. Dr Bolanos is understood to have no political affiliation, but four years ago he set up a number of medicines cooperatives in an alternative to the local chemist's shop, which charged high prices.

He later worked in a "health brigade", an experimental medical service for poor peasants who could not afford to see a doctor in town, both because of poverty and of distance.

Dr Bolanos, who is 30, is apparently awaiting trial before court martial, which, it is understood, has been postponed several times.

China announces consecration of Peking bishop

Peking, Dec 16.—Peking's first Catholic bishop since 1949, who has already been rejected by the Vatican, will be consecrated in the city's south Cathedral on Friday, the New China news agency said today. It is the first time such a "religious event" has been announced in China in advance.

Father Sun Shengzhen said at Mass today that the consecration ceremony for Mr Michael Fu Tiansheng would be presided over by three bishops of the Chinese Catholic Church.

Mr Fu was elected bishop on July 25 at a meeting of the Peking Patriotic Catholic Association, which succeeded Mr Joseph Yao Guangyu, who died in 1964.

Relations between China and the Vatican have been suspended since the 1950s.

More acceptable look for apartheid

From Ray Kennedy, Johannesburg, Dec 16

Mr P. W. Botha, the South African Prime Minister, today called for a subtle change of emphasis by Afrikaners towards the Day of the Covenant, the most solemn day in their calendar.

It commemorates the Battle of Blood River in Natal on December 16, 1838, when the Zulu war lord, Dingaan, was finally defeated and overthrown by the Voortrekkers.

Although it is a deeply religious anniversary the Day of the Covenant has long been regarded by many Afrikaners as a symbol of white superiority over blacks.

Mr Botha today called for the religious meaning of the day to be fully restored and his remarks were seen by many as encompassing his political policies to give a new, more accept-

Doctors in Biko case fail to block medical inquiry

From Our Correspondent, Johannesburg, Dec 15

Disciplinary action could be taken against two of the state doctors who attended Steve Biko, the Black Consciousness leader who died from brain damage while being detained by the security police in 1978.

A Pretoria judge has dismissed an application by Dr Benjamin Tucker, chief district surgeon of Port Elizabeth, and Dr Ivor Lang, principal district surgeon of Port Elizabeth who had tried to stop the South African Mental and Dental Council from inquiring into their conduct.

The council will now ask the doctors to complete a questionnaire arising out of complaints from Mr Eugene Roelofs, ombudsman of the South African Council of Churches. He was acting on information from reports of the inquest on Mr Biko late in 1978.

In the Pretoria Palace of Justice, counsel for the doctors, instructed by the State Attorney, claimed that the council had no inherent powers and that the complaints by Mr Roelofs were "not concise or specific."

A third doctor named at the Biko inquest, Dr Colin Hirsch, was not mentioned nor represented at the hearing.

As a result of the ruling the doctors can choose whether or not to answer the questions. The matter will then be considered by a sub-committee of the council which will decide whether or not there are grounds for a hearing by the disciplinary committee.

The inquest on Mr Biko, a magistrate found that he died from massive brain damage in a Pretoria prison cell after being driven naked and manacled to Port Elizabeth by a police truck. He found that no one was to blame for his death.

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There are three main medical indicators of the condition of the coal industry. The first, productivity, is rising and at an accelerating rate. In the first 35 weeks of the current financial year, it was up 0.7 per cent over the same period of the previous year, and in the last 13 weeks it was 4.5 per cent up compared with last year.

The second indicator is a term which includes absenteeism but also non-appearance at work because of injury, illness, and all other causes. It was down 1.8 per cent at 14.7 per cent in the first 35 weeks of this year as compared with the same period last year. This trend is also reflected in the third indicator.

The third is recruitment. In the first 35 weeks of the last financial year there was a net loss of 7,069 men. This time there was a net gain of 423 men even before the early retirement scheme for miners has only recently come into full operation.

This scheme has contributed to an encouraging fall in the average age of the workforce, from 40.4 to 39.5 years. The industry's safety record is also improving, with the overall accident rate reaching an all-time low in the financial year 1978-9.

The NCB's cost profile is also in good health. (£112m in 1978-9 compared with £109m the year before). Only the severe weather and industrial disputes outside the industry prevented the achievement of a financial year of £109m; there was instead an overall loss of £10m.

But the coal industry is still far from being self-financing. In order to modernise and adapt itself to a vast reconstruction programme requiring an investment this financial year of some £600m (compared with £454m last year and £344m the year before). The board is putting up between 20 and 30 per cent of this and the taxpayer the rest.

The money is going on new collieries, new techniques and new applications. Sir Derek Ezra, chairman of the NCB, feels very strongly that the industry is not getting the considerable credit he believes is its due. Indeed if he were not such a mild-mannered man one might describe his feelings on the subject as passionate.

"We are creating a new industry," he said. "We are carrying out one of the most extensive exercises of industrial rejuvenation in history." The NUM has been pleasantly surprised by the relative reticence of Sir Derek's recent public utterances on the importance and claim to priority of the coal industry.

The NCB believes the industry, now producing about 120 million tonnes of coal a year, can comfortably look forward to selling 150 million tonnes by the end of the present revival programme agreed by Government, management and unions originally for the period up to 1985 but since extended to 2000. It could, they feel, easily be more. This is where the NUM outdoes the board: it believes that by the end of the century there will be a market for coal of 200 million tonnes a year (which is still considerably less than what was being produced as recently as 20 years ago).

The most remarkable aspect of the crawl through the seam was the ventilation. When I went down a coalmine last year, I had to breathe very deeply to be able to smell coal at all. It was a noticeable improvement on the London Underground.

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CINEMAS

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Commercial Properties

Restoration
office
buildings
living

Restoration—or refurbish—to use the current lingo of older office buildings is a sector of the market which continues to turn over at a steady pace. For example, the Royal Insurance Building, bought from the former London Council the old of No 1, Queen's Gate Buildings, Darnley Street, London, SW1, more than £5m.

The building is being extensively renovated in conjunction with Builders Amalgamated Co and the Civic Property Companies.

The building, which is due ready for occupation in early autumn, will provide

wide, 50,000 sq. ft. of air-conditioned offices on nine floors. St Quintin acted for Royal Insurance and is letting agent. Builders Amalgamated was represented by Brian Cooper and Co and Civic Property Companies by Douglas Good and Graham Gold.

In the City the 21-year unexpired lease held by National Westminster Bank for its office, at 1 Lombard Street, London, EC3, has been acquired by Scottish Provident Institution, the freeholders. The premises are to be extensively modernized before re-letting next year. Jones Lang Wootton acted for the freeholders and is letting agent. St Quintin acted for National Westminster. The space extends to about 4,500 sq. ft. plus 3,000 sq. ft. at basement level.

For many years the premises were the headquarters of Smith's Bank, which was originally a private family banking house established in the City in 1758. They became available

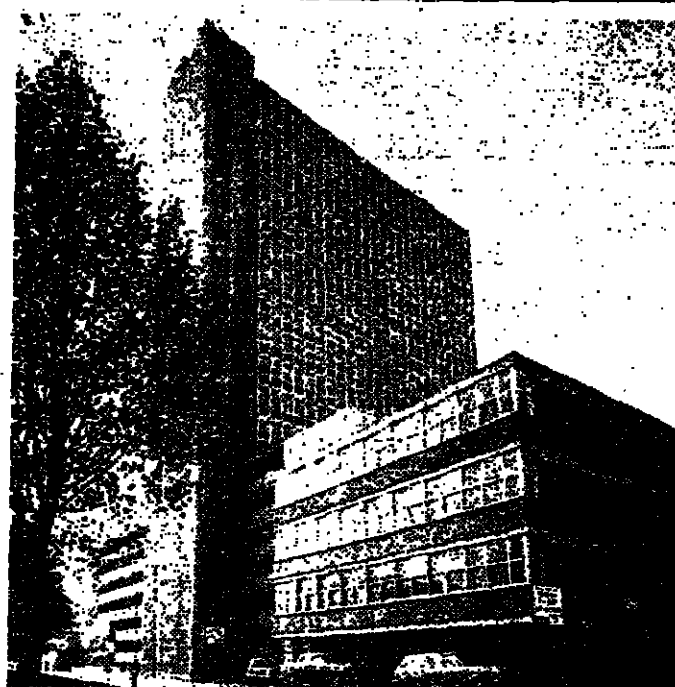
as a result of National Westminster's decision to merge the business with its Princes Street office.

Just outside London, Estates and General Investments has obtained detailed planning consent for an office development at Harefield Place, Uxbridge. The scheme will include the complete restoration of an existing Georgian mansion dating from the 18th century, which has a Grade two listing as being of special architectural or historic interest.

The mansion of about 18,000 sq. ft. stands in about 10 acres of grounds, and will be restored in keeping with the original design. The developer has also obtained planning permission for an extension of 12,000 sq. ft. to be built in an unusual half-crescent shape to take advantage of the slope of the site.

Completion is due early in 1981. The site adjoins the M40 and is within easy reach of Heathrow Airport and the M25.

In Manchester, Hambro acquired nos 1-3 York Street from the National Westminster Bank for an undis-



City House, Portsmouth, formerly occupied by the Zurich Insurance Group and now let to Pali Europe.

closed sum. This building, an example of Edwardian baroque architecture, fronting on to Spring Gardens

and York Street. Period features will be preserved in the renovation.

Work is expected to start in the next few months and when completed will provide a basement ground floor banking hall, and 18,000 sq. ft. of self-contained offices. A large private car park will be provided, and the total development value of the scheme will be about £2m.

Wrather and Co, of Manchester, acted for Hambro. In Bristol, the renovation of St Brandon's House in Great George Street, being carried out by Capital and Counties Property Co, will be completed shortly. The building comprises about 13,775 sq. ft. of offices in seven suites which can be used singly or together in sizes from 580 sq. ft.

The original building was built in the late 18th century and for much of its life was occupied by St Brandon's Clergy Daughters' School. Many of the original features of the building have been retained. Architects were Lee Greenfield and Peter Layton, of Bristol, and letting is through J. P. Surge and

Sons, also of Bristol. Rents are expected to be about £4 per sq. ft.

City House in Portsmouth, previously occupied by the Zurich Insurance Group, has been re-let by Jones Lang Wootton and Hall, Pain and Foster to Pali Europe, Ltd.

The building provides some 58,000 sq. ft. comprising a 12-storey office tower and a three-storey annexe connected to a multi-storey car park. The letting was priced at about £2 a sq. ft. A development by Rank City House is in Havant Street, beside Portsmouth Harbour rail and bus interchange.

The British Steel Corporation is disposing of its former research and development complex in Battersea Park Road, London, SW8, and is expecting to sell for £1.3m. Alternatively, the corporation would consider letting the space, which amounts to 71,000 sq. ft. to an organization requiring research and development facilities within 21 miles of Hyde Park Corner. The site, covering one acre, includes

two modern inter-linked blocks totalling about 40,000 sq. ft. together with nearly 30,000 sq. ft. of older space which has redevelopment potential.

The site is zoned for industrial purposes, but it is understood the local authority would consider a number of other uses. Elliott Son and Boynton is acting for BSC.

Fluidrive Engineering Co, through Pepper Angliss and Yarwood, has sold a site of 3.3 acres at Worton Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, to the Fleming Property Unit Trust for industrial development in conjunction with William-Lescren Developments Ltd.

Planning consent has been granted for mainly industrial units with a total area of 80,000 sq. ft. in units from 9,000 sq. ft. The first phase is expected to be ready next June. Rents above £3 a sq. ft. are expected. Tucker Harvey and Associates advised William-Lescren and is letting agent with Pepper Angliss and Yarwood.

Gerald Ely

Secretarial and Non-secretarial
appointments

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Work at Director level for a leading travel organisation. You will be answering the telephone, taking letters and filing us to plan educational holidays for thousands of foreign students staying in English families. The job needs fast typing and shorthand, an interest in people, good telephone manner, and a sense of humour. We are offering a good salary (over £10,000 p.a.) 5 days, 1V's and the friendly atmosphere of a small c.c. only 3 mins. walk from Knightsbridge. See write or telephone for application form to: The Director, JUNIOR TOURS LIMITED, 31a Sloane Street, London SW1. Telephone: 01-235 3278.

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HOE! HOE! HOE!
£5,500
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The Middle East: William Frankel on the choices after Mount Sinai

Common ground or wars and terror?

The second anniversary of President Sadat's portentous visit to Jerusalem was marked last month by an Egyptian ceremony at Mount Sinai glorifying peace—and by violence from Palestinian terrorists directed against Israel.

The Palestinians were demonstrating that the Arab world stands by its 1967 resolution of no negotiation and no peace with Israel. So far, the Egyptian President has stood with his efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. In an optimistic interview in *The Times*, Mr Sadat prophesied that "it will come sooner or later" and expressed his conviction that the first stage, the autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, would soon be concluded. But the continuing absence of other Arab negotiators is certainly discouraging.

The possibilities inherent in autonomy were interpreted by Abba Eban, Israel's former Foreign Minister. He has written that "if the government respects its signature of the Camp David accords, it should admit that it has created a clear option for partition" which he amplified on another occasion as meaning "the eventual Arab destiny" of the area. Yet Mr

Begin's divided and faltering Government, even as it negotiates autonomy, has announced an increased programme of settlement in the West Bank almost universally assailed abroad as incompatible with his expressed desire for peace.

Inside Israel, Jewish settlement in the territories occupied as a result of the 1967 war is viewed differently. The numerically very small but disproportionately influential Gush Etzionim are the ardent settlers believing in the fulfilment of the biblical promise. These activists see themselves as performing God's will by dwelling in the holy and promised land.

A much larger number of Israelis also support Jewish settlement but on different grounds. To them, it is shameful and unprincipled to acquiesce in the proposition that these areas must be "Judeanised". The concept itself is unacceptable and in practice inequitable since Arabs live freely in Israel where they can purchase and own property. Why should not Jews have the same rights in the West Bank, they ask, whatever the future disposition of the territory?

Possibly most Israelis are opposed to the settlements. At the same time, they are in favour of at least

some Israeli defence presence in these buffer zones until real peace arrives with secure and recognized borders. The country is so small that, without some defence in depth, her centres of population would be vulnerable to attack whether by terrorists or regular forces.

Yet however cogent the case that can be made in patient and reasonable discussion, the prevailing reality in the Middle East is of impatience and suspicion. In this atmosphere, Israel's settlement policy and such inept and damaging actions as that against the Mayor of Nablus inevitably fuel Arab fears of Israeli expansionism and duplicity.

Mr Begin can be in no doubt that these policies of his Government are alienating Israel's friends abroad and providing ammunition to her enemies. They should be, and are being, forthrightly condemned. But serious and harmful as they are, these are not the issues which are standing in the way of peace; they are serious troubles and irritating side-shows. The Sinai settlements which Mr Begin had vowed would never be relinquished, were returned to Egypt in the peace treaty. Vital oil resources were given up last week. It will be more difficult for Mr Begin to abandon settlements

The Camp David agreements still offer the best possibility of movement in the intractable Middle East

In the West Bank—and conceivably he might bequeath that task to his successor—but all the precedents suggest that Israel would not allow them to obstruct a real settlement were it available.

When the 1974 Arab Summit at Rabat recognized the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians, it endowed that organisation with the power of veto. And the PLO has exercised it by pursuing a wholly negative and uncompromising policy. It will not accept

the United Nations resolutions which call for a negotiated settlement. It does not accept Israel's right to exist, its covenant maintains that only Palestinians have the right to live in the Palestinian state (which is defined to include the "State of Israel") together with only those Jews who lived there before 1917.

Apologists for the PLO, offering no credible evidence, claim that this is all rhetoric and that the organisation really is moderate. The Israelis can hardly be criticized for failing to take risks with their very existence on the faith that Mr Yasser Arafat and his associates do not mean what they say.

Of course the Palestinians have a case, but what are their aims now? If they do not seek the destruction of Israel, what do they want? Their objectives have never been authoritatively and clearly defined other than in their covenant. The present rigid, unconstructive and violent posture of the PLO, the only available evidence of what they stand for, deepens Israel's apprehension and strengthens the hands of her die-hards.

The same voices applauding doubtful Arab moderation, exhort or ridicule Mr Sadat for having broken the united Arab front and

"desabilized" the Middle East. Stability was not a notable characteristic of the region even before the Sadat initiative and a united front based solely on rejection is surely better broken.

The Camp David agreements still offer the best possibility of movement in the intractable Middle East scene. Were they to accept the role they have been offered in the negotiations, the Palestinians could at least make some progress towards the recognition of their legitimate rights. Regrettably they have remained resolutely obstructive, as much out of fear of the ruthlessness of the PLO than through support for its policies. The murder of the Imam of Gaza earlier this year because he had been prepared to talk about co-existence with the Israelis has been an effective deterrent to other real moderates.

Because Israel is a free and democratic society, her flaws and wrongdoings are open, not only to the scrutiny of the world but to the investigation of her courts of law and to the often clamorous criticism of her own citizens. Censure of the PLO is less evident partly through ignorance of what transpires in a secretive and fragmented

organization and partly out of reluctance to offend the warring states and, possibly, the weapon. The vast flow of critical information from one side and its virtual absence from the other, has created a public image of Israel as a continuation, aggressive and arrogant.

That view does not accord with the facts. Israel has demonstrated "negotiated" made concessions, compromises in glaring contrast to the rejectionists. Her willingness to compromise can be tested in future negotiations which two sides are necessary, long as the PLO and the A states which follow the line, refuse to talk, recognizing and negotiating are the real obstacles to peace for the Israelis. Moreover, if intransigence is bound to intensify Israel's preoccupation with security, the choice in the Middle East was exemplified by the two events on November 19. Mount Sinai, scene of President Sadat's historic and requested visit of reconciliation to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, symbolizes reconciliation and common ground. The alternative is the recurrence of cycle of wars and terror, illustrated by the bombing of the Jerusalem bus that same day.

Philip Howard joins in the centenary toasts to Oxford's proud lionesses

The formidable ladies of Somerville

A group of science students at Somerville in 1896. In those days Oxford considered science a dangerous and disreputable subject for men

Question, question: what have Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, and Shirley Williams in common, apart from sex and variegated politics? Put it another way. What is the connection between Iris Murdoch, Esther Rantzen, and Margherita Laski? The answer is that they all went to Somerville College, Oxford, that proud nursery of lionesses, which has been celebrating its centenary this year.

Since the outrageous notion put out that women should be permitted to be publicly educated and have careers, the success of Somervillians has been conspicuous, constant, and disproportionate. You could say that Somerville was the Balliol of women's colleges. If you wanted to vex Somervillians, since they consider themselves, with some justice, second to none.

There is no such thing as a typical Somervillian. But an unfair number of Somervillians turn out to be successful and distinguished. They tend to be independently minded and to query everything; formidably argumentative, a critic might say. For a hundred years now they have been busting into politics and other forms of public service to the national advantage.

A century ago a few dons and their wives and sisters decided that Oxford should at last admit the possibility that women were capable of higher education: a revolutionary idea that was catching on at other places such as Cambridge. They formed the Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women in Oxford, the AEHW for short.

The plan was to arrange lectures and teaching for women, and to provide a "Ladies' Hall" where students from outside Oxford could board and lodge. The association split on that old Oxonian rock of religion. Lady Margaret Hall with nine students was established as the Church of England foundation. Somerville Hall was the undenominational foundation, offering its 12 students freedom from any religious test or obligation.

It was named after Mary Somerville, the queen bee of nineteenth century science: Somerville has always taken



science seriously, even in those days, when Oxford considered science a dangerous and disreputable subject for men.

The two halls opened on October 13, 1879. An early anecdote, which illustrates the eternal difference between LMH and Somerville, Miss Shaw Lefevre, the first principal of Somerville, one day had a weep on the shoulder of Miss Wordsworth, her counterpart at LMH, because she found her flock so difficult to control. Miss Wordsworth consoled her: "It is a pity we cannot change places, because I should know how to snub your charges, and mine would not need to be snubbed."

From those brave early days, when women students suffered the double disadvantage of being conspicuous because of their scarcity, and having to be catered to by lecturers, librarians, and laboratories, Somerville has grown.

Women were soon appointed as tutors; but they had no share in the management of what had been retained a college until 1903. Some honours examinations were opened to women, but a proposal that they should be admitted to de-

grees was decisively rejected. Somerville founded the first research fellowship for women.

In 1920 at last women were admitted to matriculation, degrees, membership of congregations, and so on. In 1951 Somerville became the first self-governing women's college in Oxford, and in 1959 a full college of the university. In 1977 the final barricade of discrimination fell: the university restriction on the number of colleges admitting women undergraduates was withdrawn; and all colleges became eligible to take turns in electing proctors.

A century ago the principal of Somerville asked permission for her students to walk in the gardens of St John's College. The president of St John's replied: "Madam, the gardens of this college are dedicated to horticulture, not husbandry. We have come a long and worthy way since then, Somerville has become a national institution."

It has been celebrating its centenary with a Gaudy, a college feast, and a memorial lecture by one of its daughters who has done well, Professor Dorothy

Hodgkin, the witch (taken as a complimentary feminine of wizard) on the X-ray crystallographic analysis of the structure of molecules, who won the Nobel Prize for chemistry.

It is sadly significant how many words there are in the English vocabulary for a wise woman, and how few for a wise man. The JCR decided to put on Wyndham's *Love in a Wood* for the celebration; it has the advantage of nine female parts. The principal of Somerville, nervously: "Is it very improper?" The organizer, indignantly, in pure Somerville: "Not at all: it's a Restoration comedy."

At the peak of the Gaudy there were 3,000 Somervillians, husbands, and children picnicking in the college gardens. They came from as far apart as California and Auckland, Iceland and South Africa. Somerville's tradition of academic excellence and public service was exemplified by the sight of Mrs Margaret Thatcher (who came to the Gaudy as an old Somervillian) discussing plutonium with her former tutor, Dorothy Hodgkin, and her former principal, Janet Vaughan.

Somerville has decided to remain at present a college exclusively for women, while all around it Oxford colleges are about to go co-residential. For one thing women have been in the forefront for only a comparatively short time. For another, there is the family pride in the achievements of Somervillians over the past century.

Mrs Barbara Craig, the principal, says that applicants for undergraduate places will have to be interviewed by the college. In a mixed university there are advantages in belonging to a single-sex college: "A mixed college, I am assured, is likely to be an uninvolved place, where the men will expect you not to look beyond your own college. If you are in a single-sex college, you will certainly make friends within it; but you will also be bound to look outside as well, and to become much more part of the university."

Whether Somerville can persist in going its own way while other colleges disregard gender remains to be seen. But the pioneer of the outrageous notion that women are also people and can be educated has become a glory of its university.

Eric Heffer

Why Labour must think again after Strasbourg

It is essential for Labour to examine its attitude to Europe and the EEC

The vote cast by Labour's Euro-MPs against the budget at Strasbourg last week raises important questions for the Labour Party regarding the role of its Euro-MPs. It also clearly indicates the future direction of the assembly, which is undoubtedly a great step towards becoming as powerful a European Community institution as the Council of Ministers.

Labour's Euro manifesto states "The EEC assembly is not a real Parliament... it is largely a consultative body. We believe it should remain so." It accepted that the assembly has partial control over the Community budget with the sledgehammer power, which it is unlikely to use, of dismissing the Commission as a whole. It further stated "the Labour Party is firmly opposed to any extension of these powers". The Tory Euro manifesto also said it will fully endorse the section in the treaty that prevents the Parliament from adding to its powers unilaterally.

Although these are the views of the two major British political parties, the reality is that Euro-MPs cannot be expected to sit around Strasbourg without using their collective strength. It was precisely because an elected Euro-assembly would demand and ultimately achieve more power, slowly moving towards becoming a real Parliament, that the Labour Party rightly opposed direct elections.

Direct elections, however, have been held, Euro-MPs have been elected and, as last week's vote proves, are increasingly using their powers, with the Federalists among them seeking to extend these so that in future they can exert a more effective control over the Commission and the Council of Ministers.

Had Labour's Euro-MPs kept strictly to the spirit of Labour's manifesto, they would either have voted for the budget, or abstained. They did neither, and in my view, they were right. Some could have done better, explain back in Britain that although the budget was detrimental to the interests of the British people, they had voted for it because of a section of Labour Euro-manifesto.

Following the rejection of the budget by the Euro-MPs, which has undoubtedly caused a serious crisis in Community affairs, and taking into con-

sideration Mrs Thatcher's lack of success in her attempt to force a new demand Britain's withdrawal from the EEC? This is an understandably increasing demand, and if Mrs Thatcher fails to get her way, or retreats from the firm stand she has taken, it will gather even more momentum.

Before Labour reaches the stage of demanding withdrawal from the EEC, however, there are important preliminary steps that could be taken to achieve our aims. The trouble is that Mrs Thatcher is making the same mistakes as her Labour predecessors. She has said that her Ministers and civil servants will continue to attend Community committees and totally reject the empty chair concept. No doubt her argument is that one can be just as awkward by attending meetings than by being absent. That is a fallacious argument.

If Britain refused to attend meetings, except Summit meetings, conducted as "empty chairs", she would be making the same mistake as her Labour predecessors. She has said that her Ministers and civil servants will continue to attend Community committees and totally reject the empty chair concept. No doubt her argument is that one can be just as awkward by attending meetings than by being absent. That is a fallacious argument.

I should make it clear that although against the Community as it stands at present, I am not anti-European and never have been. There is a danger, however, that because of the present EEC disagreements, Britain and even the Labour Party could withdraw into a shell of chauvinistic nationalism.

Paradoxically, a firm stand by Britain now for the changes it desires could actually begin the transformation of the Community from a rich man's

association into a more egalitarian community. The next important step the Labour Party is to examine in depth all the alternative to the EEC. Can Britain with changing patterns of trade resulting from its membership of the EEC, with the loss of Commonwealth preference, seriously regain the market had in the past? We could thus become totally dependent on the US, or unhealthily tied to the Eastern European Communist block.

There is however, a rarely considered alternative, a grouping of European states slowly moving towards a community based upon democratic socialist concepts. Such a grouping could reject both bureaucratic communism and bridled free enterprise, would, of course, be Utopian, believe that this could be attained overnight. It will be hard and long road to travel.

However the movement towards democratic socialism, gaining strength and could even stronger if social reached agreement with Euro-communists who are undoubtedly moving too far away from Soviet hegemony. Labour may well decide Britain's future is outside EEC. It is certainly right demand that Westminster its full powers restored, even if that should happen will not be able to turn its back completely on Europe, because we are essentially part European industrial and economic integration develops.

The trade unions of Europe are increasingly joining together to protect their members from the policies of the multinational companies. Euro-socialists are also having work "out" common political action across national frontiers. The Labour Party can turn its back on Euro-socialist allies and strengthen its link with it especially with the Dutch, whose other socialists, who opposed to the use of the Communist by NATO.

It is essential for Labour to examine closely its attitude to Europe and the EEC. It is a time when a radical perspective might be needed. The author is, Labour MP, Liverpool, Walton.

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NEW YORK DIARY

The argument here last week over television news coverage of Iran bears similarities to the disputes in Britain about reporting the IRA and about the interview with Mr Anthony Blunt. The issue is whether people who have offended against accepted norms of decency should be allowed a public forum for arguing their case.

Here is focused on an interview which reporters from the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) had in Tehran with Corporal William Gallegos, one of the hostages in the United States Embassy. As a condition of being allowed the interview, NBC had to let the Iranian student public relations officer make an eight-minute statement and agree that it would be aired in "prime time"—the most watched mid-evening hours.

Administration officials criticized NBC's acceptance of those conditions, variations of which the two other national networks also rejected. Mr Jody Powell, the President's press secretary, accused NBC of being party to a "cruel and very cynical" attempt to divert the attention of the American public from the illegal seizure of the hostages—a curious charge seeing that an interview with a hostage was the highlight of the broadcast.

A Congressman suggested that the network be given "the Benedict Arnold award for broadcasting"—in memory of a notable traitor in the American War of Independence. Mr

Thomas O'Neill, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, said the interview and statement were "regrettable and dangerous," and that President Carter, who had discussed it, agreed.

Mr Walter Cronkite, a veteran news-reader for the Columbia Broadcasting System, explained that his network had refused conditions made by the Iranians for a similar interview in which questions would have had to be cleared by a committee of the students. (NBC said it did not have to submit its questions in advance.)

"The students holding the embassy are stepping up the use of the hostages to promote their cause," said Mr Cronkite in a news broadcast.

Mr William Rusher, a conservative commentator, in a discussion on NBC, pointed out that freedom of speech did not include the freedom to cry "fire" in a crowded theatre. He thought the interview might have similar perilous consequences for the hostages. Mr Fred Friendly, former president of CBS News, disagreed with him and believed that the public had been well served by the broadcast.

That view was not shared by at least one NBC reporter, Mr Ford Rowan of the network's Washington bureau, who resigned to show his disapproval of it.

In the interview, Corporal Gallegos said that he and the 30 Americans confined with

him had been treated fairly well. This was seen as an unnecessary propaganda point for the Iranians, but to balance that, as Mr Friendly pointed out, the conditions which had not previously been available.

What angers the Administration most is that their own officials have been unable to make contact with Iranian ministers, with the hostages, or with the students who hold them. Yet such contacts are regularly made by members of the international press. "Television diplomacy," they call it.

Mr Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, the Iranian foreign minister, is hardly ever available in representatives of the US Government, but he gives a press conference almost daily in which he denounces and threatens the United States. This is regularly reported in newspapers and on television.

It is understandable that a president whose overriding concern is to free the hostages safely should feel irritated when others insert into the debate matters, sometimes embarrassing, which he believes do not bear directly on their object.

That is why his endorsement denounced Senator Edward Kennedy, his main rival in next year's presidential election, who dared to refer to the Shah's questionable record in office and wondered whether he should have been allowed to come here for medical treatment.

The view that certain topics should be declared off limits at times of crisis appears to be popularly held. To judge from the President's progress in the opinion polls, at Mr Kennedy's expense, since that controversy. A persuasive argument against it, though, came last week from Mr Arthur Schlesinger, a former special assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

He wrote that one of the lessons of Vietnam was that it is precisely during international crises that public discussions are most needed. "The cry of national unity has been used before to cut off debate and to conceal error. Democracy is not something to be suspended in an emergency."

Journalists in a free society equally believe that it is their duty to help people understand conflicts—even conflicts involving the national interest—by exposing the views of all protagonists. They do not have to act as though they were an extension of the Government.

The Iranians have, since the taking of the hostages, become adept at exploiting the journalists' view of their role. Outside the United States embassy in Tehran, students shout maniacally and shake their fists when the cameras are switched on. The effect is highly visual, irresistible to a cameraman, and its constant repetition on our television screens does have a cumulative effect, in spite of the fact that the commentators



are meticulous in pointing out that it is staged for our benefit. Before the interview with Corporal Gallegos, Mr Hodding Carter, a spokesman for the State Department, told a private audience at Princeton that the earlier interview conducted by all three networks with the Ayatollah Khomeini probably made things worse for the hostages.

Mr Carter maintained that the Ayatollah had vowed to place the hostages on trial only after being pressed by reporters: had they not questioned him on the matter he might never have said it and would not thus feel compelled to carry out the threat.

Another Administration official accused television reporters of asking "soft" questions of the Iranians and failing to press them hard enough about the

conditions in which the hostages are being held. Mr William Small, president of NBC News, replied: "I'm sure the people at the State Department wish they could do the same thing, but we're not going to get out of the business of informing the American people. Our guys are not there to debate the Iranians. They're there to elicit information."

This is the kind of defence used by the BBC and others when accused of being soft on the IRA. Some people outside the news media regard the argument as self-serving, not to mention pompous. (Paradoxically, these leading voices are often the most vocal in objecting to "trial by television" when the person being asked the loaded questions is a "respectable" politician or businessman.)

In the case of Mr Blunt, the newspapers were particularly excluded. From the gourmet Press conference in *The Times* boardroom objected partly on the ground that their reporters would have asked more aggressive questions than the allegedly over-respectable scribes from *The Times* and *The Guardian*.

Maybe they wanted to confront him fearlessly with the charge that he was a disgusting traitor, and what did he feel about it? Such self-righteous tactics would have made every one (except Mr Blunt) feel splendid, but, as Louis Heren pointed out on this page a few days later, they would not have

elicited any useful information.

Yet it would be unrealistic for a reporter to attempt to sustain the position that he is not there to get the story, but to record events has no influence on the way in which those events unfold. The messenger does tamper with the message, especially if he or she is carrying a camera and microphone.

The chanting Tehran students provide one example but there are others every day on television news bulletins, albeit of a more trivial nature. During the past week we have been subjected to the same old story, Long Island railroad, the largest and, in the view of those who use it, the least adequate commuter-railway in the country.

Television has well-tried techniques for reporting such events. Hasty camera pictures of bumper-bumper traffic jams on the roads, from Long Island into the city. Reporters are dispatched to underground stations, the special car parks and the pick-up points for emergency buses. On the first couple of days the snarl-ups were nowhere near as bad as had been predicted. They scarcely could have been. With seven local television stations competing for viewers, the prize goes to the one who can make the most fertile forecast of impending chaos and doom.

In the interest of truth, then, the reporters had to relay the

rush hour travel had been comparatively plain sailing. They clearly understood that doing so they might be making things worse, by, say, discouraging people from continuing to leave home early to stagger

rush hour. So they felt constrained to add a warning that although things were not as bad as might be, people should close their eyes to their guard not all try to drive over Queensborough bridge at 11 past eight.

Television has been trying to report Iran using the same guidelines as it uses to report the rail strike—giving the way company, the unions, travelling public, approximately equal time. Those are the only rules the broadcast know and they try to obey them even if sometimes it makes them look a little ridiculous.

When journalists defend Press they are suspected, ultimately, of conflict of interest. Looking, then, for an objective from an impartial vantage to round off this column, I am not sure that the author of the best journalistic freedom, Thomas Jefferson, would be of much help.

"Were it left to me," wrote Jefferson, "I should have government without a government. I should not hesitate a moment to print the latter."

Michael Leapor

The Times Obituaries Supplement: 4

On November 16, 19 and 23 *The Times* published an Obituaries Supplement in three parts. A further selection of some notable careers appears today. This completes the series

DON SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA

Internationalist and man of many parts

Don Salvador de Madariaga, Spanish former political writer and historical subject, died on December 14, 1979, in Locarno, Switzerland. He was 92. His many-sided man, born in 1886, was the son of Don de Madariaga, a colonel in the Spanish army, and began as an engineer. He was later at the Instituto del Canal Cineras, Madrid, and College Chaplain and Ecole technique, in Paris, and came to the Superintendence of the Line of the Iberian Railway. But his natural gifts asserted themselves early, and while still a student he was a full-time journalist. He was known as a journalist and editor in Spain and France. In 1916 to 1922 he lived in London, entirely as a writer, took an active interest in the project of a League of Nations, and when the League was formed, became one of the original members of the secretariat, as Secretary of the League of Nations.

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gave him a special value in this work. But military opinion was too strong, and in 1927 the commission was dissolved. In 1928 Madariaga was elected to fill the newly created King Alfonso XIII Chair of Spanish Studies in Oxford, which was attached to Exeter College, of which he later became an Honorary Fellow. In 1931 he again changed his profession, and became Spanish Ambassador, first to the USA, and then to France (1932-1934).

In 1931 he was appointed Permanent Spanish Delegate to the League, to show the country's permanent attitude to the League, irrespective of party. In this capacity he drew up a full and well-considered statement of Spanish policy, which was promptly attacked by some of the Left Republicans and made a grievance against the Foreign Minister. The Minister denied all knowledge of the paper, and repudiated Madariaga's policy, whereupon Madariaga produced the copy which had been sent to the Minister and signed by him as a token of approval. Madariaga resigned from the Government, and since the Franco rebellion, with which he could not sympathise, broke out soon afterwards, he was left in the middle of a civil war, an object of hatred to both parties. "Both would shoot me, one from in front, and one from behind."

Deprived of his estate and all

his property, as well as of all his offices, he returned to Oxford, which, for the rest of his life, became his home—or, rather, his base; for, as an established leader of thought in Europe and the standard-bearer of the cultured liberal opposition which was, at that time, exiled or persecuted everywhere in Europe, he was in constant demand as a lecturer in every part of the civilized world. He travelled everywhere, as indefatigable in his sixties and seventies as other men half his age. He was undaunted in his vicissitudes, and, in life, as in argument, being driven into a corner was a challenge to fight his way out of it. A man of utter integrity, he stimulated even the dullest, and there have been few more exciting talkers or more lively raconteurs.

Honours rained upon him from, for instance, Portugal, the United States of America, France, China, Czechoslovakia, Mexico. In political work, he became President of the International Liberal Movement and the Congress for Freedom and Culture, and a leading member of the Cultural Section of the European Movement, of the League of European States, and the European Council of Culture at Geneva. Funds he did doubt might have had, but would not accept; and it was

not easy, in the first years of his exile, to give a full life to his family, by nothing but writing and lecturing. He wrote in English, Spanish and French; the Spanish books sold most in the United States, and then, gradually, in those South American countries which wished to be on good terms with Spain. He wrote essays on English and Spanish Poetry, on *Harlem*, and on *Don Quixote* (1920), on *Spanish Folklore*, on the *Genius of Spain* (1923), on *Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards*, (1928), and, later, on *Americans*, (1930); *Anarchy or Hierarchy*, (1937); *Theory and Practice in International Relations*, (1938); *The World's Design*, (1938); *Other books were works of historical research—The Rise of the Spanish American Empire*, (1947); *The Fall of the Spanish American Empire*, (1947); *Bohemia*, (1952). Of his many lively novels, *The Heart of Jade*, (1944), translated into a number of foreign languages, was the most successful.

One must not forget his witty and delightful lectures, or his frequent contributions to the higher press of England, America, France, and Spanish America.

In 1912 he married Constance Archibald, who shared to the full his cheerful gaiety. There were two daughters of the marriage.

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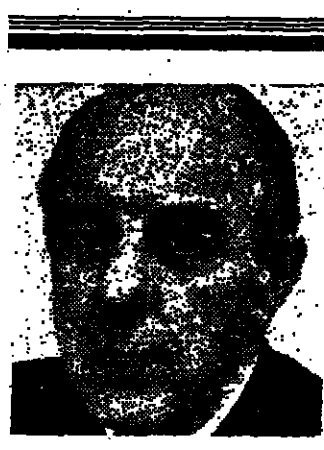
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Sir Kenneth Robson



Sir Kenneth Robson, who died on December 7, 1978, at the age of 69, was Registrar to the Royal College of Physicians of London from 1961 to 1975, during one of its most turbulent periods when, in addition to moving from its old home in Trafalgar Square to its new home in Regent's Park, its activities were expanding rapidly in the field of postgraduate education and it was becoming increasingly involved in the complex relationships between State and Medicine.

It was Sir Kenneth's administrative gifts that allowed the college to undertake this metamorphosis for such it was metaphorically if not literally, with the utmost of ease.

At the same time he was one of the leading London consultants in diseases of the chest, with appointments on the staff at St. George's Hospital and the Brompton Hospital. Never, however, did he allow himself to become a narrow specialist, and his reputation stood high in the medical community as a teacher at St. George's Hospital.

His standing as a clinician, counsellor and administrator stood equally high in the Royal Air Force, in which he served as a medical specialist in this country and in India from 1939 to 1946. From 1949 to 1977 he was Civil Consultant in Medicine to the RAF. Such was his reputation that in 1977 he was appointed honorary Air Commodore to RAF Central Medical School, a post of honour only bestowed once before.

In 1959, on behalf of the Colonial Office he made a tour of medical establishments in the Caribbean. Four years later he was Visitor for his own college and the Royal College of Surgeons of England to the Medical Faculty of Khartoum University. Subsequently he was Visitor for this college to Australia.

His versatility is further illustrated by his high standing in the sphere of life insurance: for many years he was chief medical referee to the Confederation of Life Insurance Companies. He was also a consultant to King Edward VII Hospital for Officers and King Edward VII Hospital, Middlesbrough. It was typical of many of his many parts, who could pack so much into the twenty-four hours without any apparent effort that in *Who's Who* he should record his recreation as "pottering about".

He was born in 1909 and educated at Bradfield, Christ's College, Cambridge, and the Middlesex Hospital, where he qualified in 1933. He was appointed C.B.E. in 1959 and knighted in 1968.

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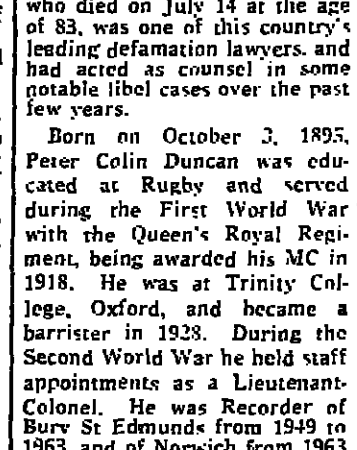
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Mr Colin Duncan



Mr Colin Duncan, QC, MC, who died on July 14 at the age of 83, was one of this country's leading defamation lawyers, and had acted as counsel in some notable libel cases over the past few years.

Born on October 3, 1895, Peter Colin Duncan was educated at Rugby and served during the First World War with the Queen's Royal Regiment, being awarded his MC in 1918. He was at Trinity College, Oxford, and became a barrister in 1923. During the Second World War he held staff appointments as a Lieutenant-Colonel. He was Recorder of Bury St Edmunds from 1949 to 1953, and of Norwich from 1953 to 1958. He became Master of the Bench, Inner Temple, in 1960.

Among his many notable libel cases were those in which he defended unsuccessfully, David Irving, the author of *The Destruction of Conyn P017* against a libel action brought by Captain Jack Braine, commander of the *Conyn* Royal Navy escort. He also represented Mr Edward Maximilian Prchal, the pilot of the aircraft in which the Polish Prime Minister, General Sikorski, was killed, when the former received substantial damages for libel in Rolf Hochhuth's play, *Soldiers*.

In 1953 he published (with Anthony Hoolahan) *Guide to Defamation Practice*. There was no more popular member of the Bar than Duncan. He was an exceptionally able lawyer and would have risen to the Victoria Cross in any field and it was in a sense a misfortune that he was so pre-eminent in the field of defamation that practice in other branches of the law were often denied to him.

There are inevitably some advocates against whom it is a pleasure to appear in court. Colin Duncan was an opponent against whom it was always a pleasure to appear. He was always scrupulously fair and set an example in the whole Bar as an advocate who did cover the thing which could be done in his clients' interest without getting involved in those alterations with opponents which sometimes happen and which do nothing to assist either the client or the court.

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Philip Hope-Wallace

Philip Hope-Wallace, CBE, died in London on September 3, aged 67, was a critic of arts as wise and searching as any in his time. A specialist in theatre and opera, he wrote about it all his working life, fuelled by an informed sense that his attractive and personable never cooled.

He enjoyed good talk, and even his a friend said he had been the original reason for his "consciousness" thing, it appeared, would be a memory, an allusion, a comparison, or an aphorism. He was among the first to appear, would be a memory, an allusion, a comparison, or an aphorism.

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Where PO went
wrong on
anticipation,
age 19

Stock markets
FT Index 431.9
FT-GE 65.4

Sterling
£2.1955
Index 69.8

Dollar
Index 85.8

Gold
\$457.00 an ounce

3-month money
Inter-bank 16 1/2 to 16 3/4
Euro-S 14 to 14 1/2
Friday's close

IN BRIEF

Commission
likes tough
ne with hi-fi
dealer

The European Commission is expected today to announce its findings on the European Commission of Japan. Its distributors in France, Germany and Britain are fighting the Rome Treaty's provisions on free competition. Although a commission spokesman refused to confirm any reports that the fines could total 6.95 million units account, (£4.5m), the announcement is nevertheless expected to mark a new tough attitude by the authorities. The Commission's findings are expected to be published in the next few days. It appears that the Commission is now prepared to levy a fine of up to 5 per cent of annual turnover on companies that break the EEC's free competition rules.

Tile industry fears
Mr Alec Smith, general secretary of the National Union of Builders and Craftsmen, says the clothing industry is fearful of the effects of support and underwriting it can expect from the Government. Mr Smith, who has led a TUC delegation to meet industry and trade union leaders, says that recent comments by the Government have done little to encourage confidence of an industry "reeling from the blow" of a 15 per cent increase in value-added tax to 15 per cent.

Building output to fall
Building contractors must cut two years' output, according to forecasts published by the industry's Economic Development Committee. This is a downturn, put at 3 per cent of output, is expected to come into effect in the first half of the following year.

New deposits move
The Canton branch of the People's Bank of China has started to accept deposits from foreign currency holders, and Chinese in Hong Kong and Macao, the official news agency reports.

Tax relief defended
Concessions on company tax should be retained, according to submissions made by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The LCCI says in its submission to the Inland Revenue's consultation paper on the subject that "realities must dictate certain fringe benefits are to be brought within the system."

Ships order
European Ferries has ordered the lighter-than-air craft for development by the Skyships, which estimates a market of 500-600 such aircraft to be sold for between £6m and £7m each.

Arabs buy 11 planes
Saudi Arabia has bought 11 aircraft, six 747 Jumbos and five TriStars, to operate on routes to the Far East and United States. The new series will boost the airline's fleet to 70.

Iran oil find
Iran's search for onshore oil to meet domestic needs has been boosted by discovery of a new oilfield in the Arabian Sea, about 50 miles south-west of Bombay. It is estimated to produce 60 to 7,000 barrels a day.

Sir John King expected to be named soon as National Nuclear chairman

By Kenneth Owen

Sir John King, chairman of Babcock International, is likely to succeed Lord Aldington, vice-chairman of the General Electric Company, as chairman of the National Nuclear Corporation (NNC) in its revised form, which is expected to be announced by the Government soon.

The effective merging of the parent NNC with the Nuclear Power Corporation, its operating arm, and the abandonment by GEC of its management contract is also expected in the reorganisation of the corporation.

Sir John King's appointment, if confirmed, is unlikely to be greeted with unanimous enthusiasm by all parts of the nuclear industry because of the Babcock connexion. An independent chairman, it is being argued, would have been a better choice.

Mr David Howell, Secretary of State for Energy, is expected to announce a substantial new nuclear power programme later this week. Some details of the proposed restructuring of the industry may also be included in his statement.

The Department of Energy last night described the report of Sir John King's appointment as "speculation". The timing of the department's announcement on the corporate restructuring appears uncertain, but it seems clear that Sir John is a candidate for the job.

As well as his position as Babcock chairman, Sir John is chairman of British Nuclear Association, the consortium of six industrial interests which together hold 35 per cent of the National Nuclear Corporation. The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority holds 35 per cent, and GEC holds 30 per cent.

These holdings are expected to be unchanged in the NNC reorganisation, at least for now.



Sir John King: unanimous enthusiasm unlikely.

Lord Aldington, on a visit to the United States, was not available for comment last night.

GEC made clear two years ago that it wished to give up the NNC management contract, worth £350,000 a year, despite the fact that this gave it effective control over the Nuclear Power Corporation, the NNC's executive subsidiary. There was a belief, however, that the contract prevented any major decisions being taken without the consent of the Government.

It is understood that GEC now considers the reorganisation including the stepping-down of Lord Aldington and withdrawal from the management contract, to be no more than a change of emphasis. It is felt that by retaining 30 per cent stake in NNC, little could be done without GEC's consent.

In 1974 Mr Eric Varley, then Secretary of State for Energy, rejected the United States design in favour of the British design generating heavy water reactor (SGHWR). In 1976 Mr Varley's successor, Mr Harold Wilson, cancelled the SGHWR.

In 1978 Mr Benn announced that two AGRs would be built and design and safety work would continue on PWRs. The present Government has given a commitment to a strong nuclear programme, but has not yet sketched in the detail.

According to Department of Energy projections, about 15 new nuclear power stations will be needed by the year 2000 to meet Britain's energy requirements. This would mean a doubling of the nuclear power available between 1977 and 1985, and a further fourfold increase between 1985 and 2000.

Argos is still negotiating with a bedding manufacturer which has offered only some of its goods.

It is open to the OFT to take action under the Resale Prices Act against manufacturers trying to enforce resale prices on retailers by refusing supply of goods.

Earlier this year the OFT took Hotpoint, a subsidiary of General Electric Company, to the High Court to secure Hotpoint's agreement to supply the Comet discount chain on terms similar to those offered other customers.

After the OFT asked for an explanation of its pricing policy, Philips Industries gave an assurance that it would withhold supplies from cut-price retailers.

But there have been difficulties for Mr Borrie in taking action under the resale prices legislation and the OFT's file on refusals to supply is likely to be used when the Director General gets wider powers early next year.

When the Competition Bill becomes law, probably in January, Mr Borrie could act on the basis that supply refusals were an anti-competitive practice.

trial nations, although President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing has everyone guessing by saying in a recent speech that he was thinking about promoting some new ideas. He gave no clue what these might be.

Negotiating progress is being made within the International Monetary Fund on a substitution account, but the pace is slow. The industrial governments believe the fund is well-endowed with lendable resources, and there are no informal talks being held to strengthen it.

There are no initiatives planned on trade either—it seems as if everyone is thoroughly exhausted after completing the bilateral trade negotiations this year under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

There seems to be agreement, however, to seek new ways, involving modest expense, to increase development aid flows, perhaps concentrating more on assistance to energy-producing products in developing countries.

But the leading industrial countries seem content to continue along the "energy, money, trade and aid" courses that now are so well charted, and to refrain from any dramatic new initiatives.

Some officials suggest that the main achievement of recent summit has been to produce broad agreement in policies of fiscal and monetary restraint, combined with long-term policies to strengthen the supply side of the economy and boost productivity.

But as 1980 dawns, the outlook may appear worse when one reflects upon the prospects of these macro-economic courses being followed. Will the Canadians be forced to go for an inflationary economic stimulus as a new election approaches?

How conservative will the economic policies be of the French, German and American governments as they move towards election dates next year?

Frank Vogt

agreements on still tougher limits at last week's International Energy Agency Conference in Paris.

In the next few months some officials believe that still further progress can be made by the industrial powers cooperating to reduce oil imports from Opec. This is viewed as the chief priority for 1980.

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Wholesalers back down on discount stores ban

By Derek Harris

With the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) poised to act against manufacturers which refuse to supply goods to discount outlets, there are signs that the manufacturers may be backing down. Both Tesco, one of the three leading multiples, and Argos, the catalogue showroom chain which is part of BAT, have been approached with offers of supplies.

This follows complaints from Tesco and Argos to Mr Gordon Borrie, Director General of Fair Trading, about companies refusing to supply goods.

Tesco's complaint was against a British manufacturer which refused to supply colour televisions and audio equipment, and Argos sent Mr Borrie a list of more than 30 manufacturers and other suppliers which it claimed had refused to supply goods. Both Tesco and Argos believe the refusals have been because of their price-cutting policies.

A maker of extractor fans named by Argos has now offered the company its full range and Argos is deciding which of its goods to include in its catalogue.

Tesco has had five offers of supplies in the television and consumer electronics field. One is from a multinational, another from the European community and the rest from Japanese companies.

Tesco is optimistic that reasonable terms can be negotiated to provide a range of goods. It already sells goods from six manufacturers in this sector, including two Japanese.

Mr Borrie now has a growing file on manufacturers and suppliers allegedly enforcing minimum pricing structures by their boycott of the discounters. Other multiples have had problems with suppliers.

The main sectors complained of are watches, consumer electronics products, cosmetics, bicycles, some bedding, power tools, sports goods and china and glassware. The Consumers Association is sending to Mr Borrie its own dossier which also mentions pharmaceutical equipment and some consumer durables in the "white goods" sector.

Argos is still negotiating with a bedding manufacturer which has offered only some of its goods.

It is open to the OFT to take action under the Resale Prices Act against manufacturers trying to enforce resale prices on retailers by refusing supply of goods.

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Libyan oil price increase throws Opec conference into confusion

From Nicholas Hirst

in Caracas
December 16

Libya has set a new record official oil price of \$30 a barrel, throwing the price-fixing meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which begins in Caracas tomorrow, into confusion.

The chances of Opec now achieving its desired aim of bringing order back into world oil markets with a single price structure must now be much slimmer.

Libya's oil minister, Mr Ezzedin Mabrouk, announced on the eve of the Venevian conference that the move to increase the price by \$4 a barrel, backdated to November 1, was in response to a decision by a Saudi Arabian-led group within Opec last week to raise prices by \$6 a barrel.

Mr Mabrouk criticized the Saudi move as an attempt to dictate Opec decisions. Although it is too early to say that the attempt of the moderates, led by Saudi Arabia, to form a new base for Opec prices, has failed, the makings of another two-tier structure are all too evident.

Three moderate countries—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar—last week raised their prices by \$6 a barrel, backdated to November 1, in a preemptive move to bring agreement on a single price structure at the Caracas meeting. A fourth, Venezuela, raised its price but did not backdate it.

The most important change was Saudi Arabia's lifting of its

\$18 a barrel price to \$24 a barrel, breaking through the official limit of \$23.50 fixed as the top of the two-tier structure agreed by the Opec countries earlier in the year in Geneva.

Libya, Nigeria and Algeria had broken through the Opec limit fixed in Geneva with an increase to \$26.27 a barrel. Libya has now increased this price to \$30, giving 50 cents of the rise to an Opec fund for third world development.

Little of Libya's production of two million barrels a day comes to Britain. Occidental and Conoco are important buyers of its oil delivery to Europe and the United States.

The importance of the rise for Britain is that the North African crude is similar to those in the North Sea. When the three countries increase their prices to \$26.27, the British National Oil Corporation followed suit, creating a storm of protest within the EEC.

If Libya alone goes to \$30, the effects on petrol prices will not be very marked. An average increase of 33 per cent, equal to the rise by Saudi Arabia, would put about 10p on a gallon of petrol in Britain.

The danger in the Libyan rise is that the Libyan oil minister has indicated the attempts of the moderates to hold prices down, in a preemptive move to bring agreement on a single price structure at the Caracas meeting. A fourth, Venezuela, raised its price but did not backdate it.

The most important change was Saudi Arabia's lifting of its

higher oil prices and increases in rail fares, and increases in the pipeline. The full impact of borrowing costs also has still to work its way through.

Retail price index figures released on Friday showing inflation levels still rising will bring little cheer. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer, has said there is little likelihood of a drop until the middle of next year.

There seems little doubt that inflation will have reached and possibly exceeded 20 per cent by that time.

The CBI study shows a worsening in export as well as domestic sales prospects. A slight recovery shown in November has proved to be strictly temporary.

Export order books were stated by 44 per cent of manufacturers to be "below normal" during the month to mid-December compared with 32 per cent in November and 37 per cent in November last year.

The survey, made monthly by the CBI and taken in the views of 1,949 manufacturers, is an abbreviated report pending publication of a full quarterly trends study next month.

Indications are that the downward slide in industrial prospects, including profitability, shown in October has been accentuated in the last two months.

Twenty-five per cent of manufacturers said they expected the volume of output to decline during the next four months. The figure was 9 per cent a year ago.

Only 22 per cent forecast an increase, compared with 31 per cent at the same time last year.

One of the most worrying trends has been the continuing increase in unit labour costs in Britain relative to those of its main overseas competitors.

The November survey showed a sharp decline in competitiveness compared with a few months earlier and this is expected to have intensified in the past few weeks.

could find themselves having to offer discounts.

However, to achieve a unified price structure, based on the Saudi benchmark, it is clear that Saudi Arabia will have to increase its price above the \$24 to nearer \$28 a barrel.

Otherwise a two-tier structure will continue with the uncertainty that may bring, other countries may continue to sell to the highest bidder—the development which most worries the Mr David Howell, Britain's Secretary of State for Energy.

Iran, too, seems prepared to push prices higher. Mr Ali Akbar Moinefar, the Iranian oil minister, today indicated that he would at least raise the Iranian official selling price by \$4.50 to \$28 a barrel and backdate to November 1. But the exact increase would not be imposed until the decision of the Opec ministers in Caracas.

Mr Moinefar wanted oil to be priced in line with the cost of the development of alternative energy sources, a figure he put at between \$35 and \$55 a barrel, but was prepared to accept a majority decision of maintaining unity within Opec.

Much now depends on Shaikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, the Saudi Arabian oil minister, due to arrive in London tonight. Shaikh Yamani may be tempted to try to force the moderates to keep to a structure with the benchmark at \$24 on the basis that countries charging higher prices would be forced back into line by the recession.

Building materials producers will oppose government proposals that the National House-Building Council (NHBC) be given responsibility for operating and monitoring controls for private house builders.

At the end of the week the Government published a consultation paper suggesting changes in the system of building controls. Mr Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment, is anxious that local authorities be relieved of the expense and burden of administering these controls.

Mr Richard Hermon, director general of the National Council of Building Material Producers, this week welcomed the paper. He said it indicated an end to the uncertainty surrounding a subject of vital importance to the industry.

However, he added that the material producers did not believe that parts of building control should be organized separately, as suggested by Mr Heseltine.

He viewed with extreme concern the proposal that the NHBC might be invited to assume responsibility for the control and inspection of private housebuilding.

The NHBC claims to act as the consumer watchdog for the private housebuilding industry. At present, its main role is to provide a form of guarantee.

Building materials producers raise no objections to the role of the NHBC but instead of limiting its powers to the private sector would prefer to see the unification of controls for England, Wales, Scotland and the Greater London Council.

Although Mr Heseltine has yet to be persuaded of its value, a national agency to coordinate a new system might yet be established.

Mr Heseltine has said that the Government is not committed to a particular policy on controls and that the present proposals have been published to encourage discussion within the building industry.

MANGANESE BRONZE HOLDINGS LIMITED

Extracts from the Report and Accounts to 31 July, 1979

	1979	1978
Issued Share capital and Reserves	£1,026	£1,000
Group turnover	33,980	32,701
Profit after taxation	1,612	2,341
Earnings per Ordinary Share	15.14p	23.04p

* The Directors have recommended a final dividend on the Ordinary Share capital of 2.17p per Share (1978—2.103p per Share), to Shareholders on the Register on 30 November, 1979 with an option to take Ordinary Shares in lieu.

* The recovery anticipated during the second six months of the year was duly realised.

* The group has made a poor start to the current year due to the effects of the nationwide strike of engineering workers.

THE POUND

	Bank buys	Bank sells	Bank buys	Bank sells
trials 5	2.01	1.95	11.35	10.85
trial 5b	29.00	27.00	113.00	108.00
trial 5c	66.00	62.00	113.00	108.00
trial 5d	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5e	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5f	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5g	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5h	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5i	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5j	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5k	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5l	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5m	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5n	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5o	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5p	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5q	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5r	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5s	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5t	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5u	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5v	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5w	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5x	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5y	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00
trial 5z	11.35	10.85	113.00	108.00

BY THE FINANCIAL EDITOR

How to market Government debt

The Treasury and the Bank of England have not been having the quietest of Christmas. Apart from having to pass the spending plans, they have also had to cope with Ministers' anxiety to have the issue of monetary reform sorted out. And that, again, not simply by devising efficient ways of controlling the banking system but, in all probability, of improving a method of marketing Government debt.

There have, of course, been a number of developments already aimed at improving the market, such as the more vigorous use of national savings and certificates of tax deposit. And in the gilt market itself there has been the introduction of variable rate and partly-paid stocks.

Variable rate issues have generally not been as successful as some hoped, while the appeal of the partly-paid stocks has been the underlying conditions are still poor. None of these developments have provided more than a limited solution to the underlying problem. Consequently, the problem remains an important area for debate, and there is little shortage of solutions on offer.

At one end of the spectrum are those who want direction of investment. At the other end are those who believe the present system is probably adequate provided that the Government runs a smaller borrowing programme. Others believe that the continuation of a more reasonable borrowing programme and an effective monetary control system using the monetary base will do much of the pressure off the gilt market.

In the middle, there are those who want to concentrate on debt instruments and debt structures. Here the most commonly proposed solutions are: index-linked bonds; a revenue tender mechanism (not to be confused with the kind of tender presently used to take the top off the borrowing cost—a rising market); and the greater range of short-term debt instruments.

All three, however, have their problems. Index-linked bonds are still regarded in official circles as the thin end of a dangerous wedge. The wholesale switch to the new system implies radical change in the debt market structure, with the change in the gilt market inevitably flowing through the equity market too.

Not that this would necessarily be bad; it would certainly take time and require considerable thought. There are several arguments against increasing the number of short-term debt instruments.

One, concerns control of the banking system's reserve assets and, by extension, its capacity to increase credit. This, however, is something that could be dealt with by a monetary reform package that concentrated on greater control of the assets side of banks' balance sheets.

The other objection is the potential financing problem in a period when the government is already facing a massive budget deficit.

There should, however, be a considerable reduction in shortening the debt profile in the face of high interest rates. It is a fact that the funding problem to which too little attention has been given as the authorities have concentrated most of their attention on securing the most obvious source of funds, the long term institutional investor.

Imperial bid adding another leg Stormy meeting is, in prospect, but special group seems almost certain to get away when shareholders vote in London today on the planned £630m takeover of the world Johnson restaurant chain in the United States.

The majority of institutions, who control about one-third of the equity, has been in favour of the deal since the outset and the Imperial board has apparently done a good job in ironing-out pockets of resistance. As a result, for example, has switched backing within the past few days, and is now backing the deal.

The underlying institutional view seems to be that whatever bricksbats might be thrown at Imperial—and there is plenty of ammunition available—the deal looks a sound long-term move. On balance their view looks right.

Admittedly, Imperial is paying a high price for Ho-Jo but an exit p/e ratio of over 10 is not far wide of the norm for United States takeovers. As British banks, for example, have found. It is also true that instead of chancing its arm in the United

States, Imperial could run down its £340m in gilts, and reward shareholders with a payout—perhaps as much as 25p a share without upsetting the gearing too drastically.

However, Imperial has been signalling a bid of this dimension for some time and shareholders who have kept faith with the group—presumably for the progressive dividend record rather than profits performance—can hardly quibble now that those plans have turned into reality.

Pears that Ho-Jo may have run out of growth are not so easy to ally especially as profits this year are unlikely to be much above last year's £33.6m with the motor lodges hand-hit by summer fuel shortages.

Imperial's argument is that the shortages were exceptional and that the Americans will do their utmost to retain their mobile lifestyle, and Ho-Jo is already diversifying into localised community restaurants.

Swinging the balance is the fact that even in the short-term the acquisition will cause only marginal earnings dilution although on a rough calculation of Ho-Jo's assets, which include \$80m cash, gearing could rise from around 50 per cent to nearer 80 per cent after deducting goodwill.

There is still a slight possibility that the deal could fail if Imperial's lawyers cannot overcome State liquor licensing problems, and even if successful the transaction could be delayed well into next summer. This might not be a bad thing for Imperial which is almost certainly sitting on a fairly sizable current loss on its gilt holdings and would have to carry some heavy short-term borrowing costs while awaiting redemption if the deal went through now.

Meanwhile, currency movements are making the deal look cheaper all the time in sterling terms—£226m at the moment against £300m initially—although the picture could change between now and next summer.

Imperial has not been all that canny a buyer in the past—the returns from Courage are very low compared with the cost and Eastwood is worryingly cyclical—but needs something more than the vulnerable tobacco business in the 1980s. Ho-Jo is the right size, in the right business and the right currency to fit the bill.

Norcorros Acquisition benefits Norcorros has had to lean heavily on its recent acquisition of Johnson-Richards Tiles to keep profits looking respectable in an otherwise difficult trading period in the six months to the end of September.

Without the Johnson-Richards cushion, profits would have been £1.5m deficit but in the comparable figure has been held to a £0.2m setback leaving pre-tax profits of £3.02m.

In what is becoming a familiar pattern for the group, exports and the overseas operations are proving more resilient than the domestic side. So while operating profits at home are a quarter lower at £3.3m, overseas is only an eighth down at £2.9m.

The losses in France have been more than halved at £400,000 but the curbs in state spending has lopped £1m off Nigeria's contribution at £1.1m.

In the United Kingdom the chief damage has come from the impact of the engineering strike on the materials handling and light engineering divisions. Norcorros reckons the strike to have cost it £1m and this has meant a £1.7m swing to losses of £0.8m in materials handling.

Elsewhere, a strong performance from Critical Warmite double glazing and tiles has not prevented the consumer division also going into the red by £0.37m.

Once again the problem child on the consumer side is Hygena kitchen furniture which has chalked up losses of £400,000 in the first half and once again Norcorros is banking on reorganization there to pull it back into the black next year.

Whatever the short-term problems, Norcorros is reasonably confident about the future—printing and packaging for example should pick up if sterling weakens—and is backing that with a heavy capital spending programme, spread evenly throughout the group, of £12m which the balance sheet can handle without undue strain.

When Norcorros does fire on all cylinders, it could become exciting, but for the moment the black spots make the shares rather speculative. But a p/e ratio of 5 on the low tax charge assuming an unchanged £20m this year and a prospective 11 per cent yield, if the dividend is increased by a tenth, is taking nothing on chance.

Workers on the board: what went wrong at the Post Office

The trade unions now realize that the problems facing industry are too important for their resolution to be left to management alone

An experiment in industrial democracy will end this month with the decision of the Government not to reappoint trade union nominees to the Post Office Board.

The reason given is lack of agreement on the continuation of the arrangements between the Post Office and the unions. It is an open secret that the real objection came from all but one of the full-time management members of the board, all men of great experience either in business or Post Office management or both.

The Post Office management would claim that it is not against participation as such, merely this particular form of it.

Equal numbers of trade union nominees and management members, with a smaller group of independents, have made for a large board. In their first two years, the trade union board members, careful of their different constituencies, have concentrated on industrial relations issues—at the expense, say management, of some other broad policy issues.

At a deeper level, Post Office management says that conflicts of interest are too sharp for constructive discussion of policy issues to be confirmed by external monitors from the Warwick-based Industrial Relations Research

Unit. This has led to a failure to meet management's own criteria for the experiment of a gradually informed collective decision-making and benefit to the customer.

This view is not shared by the unions. They say that in an organization like the Post Office, heavily dependent on labour-intensive operations and the goodwill of employees working in a technically complex environment, industrial relations are central to the Post Office's success.

For many years the tone of relationships has been set by the unions; reliance set by management upon industrial relations has led to a lack of management sensitivity on industrial relations issues. This year's strike problems arose from the wages fund policy, not from industrial democracy.

The unions think that the

increased flow of information and understanding of Post Office problems and policies has gradually informed collective bargaining—not to make it easier, but to make it more soundly based. It is a two-way process. Union members on the board provide a knowledge of their attitudes and of the pressures upon their members. This makes for better board decisions—as, for example, in dealing with the impact of changing technology on Post Office staff.

These differences in perception reflect differences in expectations. Management looks to the achievement of formal objectives; unions to a process of development, starting from the basis of a well-ordered system of collective bargaining and consultation.

The Post Office unions will regret the end of what to them was a useful and important development. Discussions will

continue, of course; the unions certainly cannot afford to stop looking for development, faced as they are with rising aspirations on the part of their members, not only for pay and conditions but also for an increasing role in determining the total environment in which they work. Nor can the unions afford to let management slip into a completely adversarial role.

Meanwhile, both sides are faced with a substantial set of problems in the Post Office—organizational (as a result of the split between postal and telecommunications services); and technological and operational problems affecting services to the customers.

That is the nub of the thing and the lesson for British industry. The trade unions now realize that the problems facing the industry are too important for their resolution to be left to management alone. Wrong solutions will mean a loss of jobs

and declining standards which point to Britain ending up as an industrial slum.

That is why unions will insist increasingly upon first exercising an influence on and then making a share in decision-making. That is the strategic consideration. But at shop-floor level it is possible to observe a growing impatience on the part of workers with the sheer incompetence, of much of management.

Looked at from this end of the telescope, it would seem that management and unions are talking about the same thing when they agree about the need for participation.

Certainly, at the CBI conference—which I attended and recommended to trade union colleagues—there was much talk of participation and involvement in decision-making or discussions of the structures necessary to achieve it.

In the Post Office—or any other organization, for that matter—the first step to freedom of participation is an acknowledgement that the "right to manage", without involvement of the managed, has gone for ever.

Antony Carter
The author is secretary-general of the Council of Post Office Unions.

Michael Frenchman

How much oil off the Falklands?

New evidence for what may be a major oil find in the South Atlantic near the disputed Falkland Islands is coming to light. This follows the collection and analysis of new information from a number of seismic and other surveys carried out by British, American, and Argentine companies and agencies.

Important developments are taking place in the exploration of hydrocarbon and marine resources in these controversial waters. After rising oil prices and continuing political changes in the Middle East the pressure is on to evaluate possible oil deposits, which according to the United States Geological Survey in the early seventies, could be nine times the North Sea. This estimate was greeted with some incredulity at first but now seems to be treated with less scepticism.

Last year a joint seismic survey of the continental shelf was carried out on behalf of the Argentine and British governments. This covered the 400-mile wide ocean floor between the mainland of Argentina and the islands, whose sovereignty is the subject of a long standing dispute with Britain.

There is a strong possibility that a substantial oil facility to service present and future offshore drilling programmes could be established in the tiny group of islands, which have a population of under 2,000.

The survey, which included sponsorship by BP and three other leading oil companies, was done by two American companies, Geophysical Services Inc. and Western Geophysical. It covered approximately 200,000 square miles of the sea bed.

British government officials have refused until now to make any statement on the findings of the survey. But, after the recent agreement to exchange ambassadors, after an absence of three years, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office now says that the preliminary survey "does not rule out the presence of hydrocarbons".

The British National Oil Corporation also agrees that the results are "more encouraging than discouraging".

Texas Instruments UK, on behalf of Geophysical Services Inc., obtained an exploration licence for £100 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and "shot" a total of 15,832 kms of seismic graphic lines over a wide area.

license also gave the company the option for three annual renewals and it appears that another survey was carried out by CGS involving further 1,000 km of seismic lines. This again covered most of the continental shelf to the west of the islands and was completed earlier this year.

Oil experts from both the United States and Britain agree that sedimentary rock layers of the hydrocarbon bearing type exist in five main rock basins on the continental shelf. Argentina is already drilling in the southern-most offshore areas east of the island of Tierra del Fuego and on the island itself.

Oil has been found in the so-called "Spring Hill" formation at a depth of over two kilometres just above the Jurassic rock layer. This information is shown on a speculative geological cross section map of the Magellan basin which stretches across the continental shelf from the Magellan straits, which divide Tierra del Fuego from the mainland, to Weddell Island in the Falklands.

Based on the latest available data this map section indicates that the kind of oil-bearing rock formation should be found approximately 41 degrees west of Weddell Island at a depth of 3.5 kilometres between the Cretaceous and Jurassic rock layers.

Alexander MacDonald, whose company, MacDonald Drilling and Offshore Services, is proposing a new exploration programme to the government of the Falklands, believes that further surveys and tests are essential. He adds: "There is the possibility of a major hydrocarbon deposit on or around the continental shelf. Looking for oil there is now an economic proposition and many major oil

companies are very interested in participating in exploration."

It would be necessary to prove an oil output of at least 150,000 barrels a day to make production drilling viable.

The Argentine state oil agency, YPF, has already gone ahead with an expanding offshore drilling programme on a risk contract basis with international companies. Two of the latest concession blocks covering 14,000 sq km are being awarded to an Esso consortium in blocks TDF ELI and ELI. The next two blocks to the east of these—CMA-4 and CMA-5—bring Argentina's drilling programme in the southern Malvinas Basin very close to the Falklands and include an area where it is expected to find the same oil-bearing rock formation as Spring Hill.

With the acceleration in oil activity in the region both Mr MacDonald and Metra, the Anglo-French consultants, believe that the Falklands will have an important role to play in the future development of oil exploration even at the present stage. The islands offer the only practical base to service rigs which will be operating in the new YPF concession areas off Tierra del Fuego.

Numerous risk contracts and production sharing agreements for oil exploration and development have been proposed to the islands and to the British Government as the main licensing

authority. But in the past there has been a marked reluctance to admit this or even discuss it publicly, because of the sensitivity over the sovereignty issue.

An additional factor, according to one source, is the conflict of commercial interests on the part of some advisers to the authorities. However, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office says that it will give consideration to any applications, bearing in mind the problems involved.

Mr E. W. Hunter Christie, chairman of the Falkland Islands Research and Development Association in London, said yesterday about the prospects for oil: "Sooner or later somebody is going to have to drill here. We are on the wrong foot because the FCO pursued the wrong policy two years ago."

"What would have been a risky political development and a doubtful commercial one is now becoming an essential one for the development of the island. It is far more likely to be profitable now than it was even three years ago."

Mr Christie says successive governments have refused to grasp the "oil" message in the Falklands. He wants urgent government action, otherwise Britain and the Falklands could miss out on what could become another North Sea in the Southern oceans.

Glass banks begin to pay dividends

Throw-away containers provide Britain's glass bottle industry with almost all its profits. With the nation consuming extra millions of bottles of drink over Christmas it is sobering to consider what happens to all the empties.

Despite the gradual spread of the industry's "bottle bank" scheme, which relies on householders taking bottles to a central point, only a tiny proportion of re-deposit bottles are melted down for re-use. But efforts are now being made to install bottle banks in 200 towns and cities by the end of 1981. But even then, these purpose-built skips will be collecting about 150,000 tonnes of glass a year—a mere 10 per cent of national consumption.

The industry, through its trade body the Glass Manufacturers' Federation (GMF), is pleased, however, and more than a little surprised at the reception that so far has been afforded to the scheme. What

was initially a public relations exercise to counter environmentalists' criticisms of throw-away bottles and jars has become a permanent project which has already spurred investment in recycling of more than £800,000.

Mr Steve Shelley, assistant director of the GMF, says he had not expected it to be more than an experiment, "but it has generated vast enthusiasm and there is no reason to believe that it cannot stand on its own feet economically."

At present, the economics of bottle banks are slightly hazy. The scheme is in its infancy and the potential profit for the glass makers remains uncertain.

The banks, of which there are at present about 50, are installed in conjunction with local authorities who provide the skips and glass storage areas and are paid a price for the cullet, or waste glass, that is collected. Householders are encouraged to dispose of their

clear, amber and green bottles in the skips' segregated sections and the cullet is delivered, generally at the council's expense, to the glass works.

The main ingredients of glass—soda ash, sand and limestone—cost an average of £30 per tonne, while the current delivered price per tonne of cullet is £15.12. If the cost of processing the cullet and, in the cases of United Glass and Rockware, who are building new recycling plants, depreciation charges are added to the cullet price, the cost to the manufacturer of recycling waste becomes almost the same as that of virgin raw materials.

There is, however, a potential energy saving of some significance. The GMF calculates that the expansion of bottle banks will lead to a saving of power used in raw material extraction and glass manufacture equal to four million gallons of oil, worth at present prices about £15m a year.

These figures, however, are not totally representative. Reading, for example, expects to raise £300,000 from the sale of cullet in 1980. A certain amount of cullet is necessary in the mix to give the end product strength and the manufacturers traditionally have been able to satisfy their needs by recovering waste from their big commercial customers.

In the future, unless there is a swing back to the returnable bottle, there will be a greater reliance on what one glass industry man described as "to put the bottle bank before the dustbin".

Mr Shelley adds a warning that "we don't expect that anybody is going to make vast amounts of money out of bottle banks and we are encouraging authorities to donate what money they do make to local charities."

The GMF says, cautiously, that so long as a local authority is within 150 miles of a glass works and can collect one tonne of glass per week per skip then it will not lose on the deal.

The cost of five skips and storage bays is estimated at £5,000. If each yielded the conservative one tonne per week, it would take nearly 45 weeks to cover initial costs, and that takes no account of delivery charges.

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In the future, unless there is a swing back to the returnable bottle, there will be a greater reliance on what one glass industry man described as "to put the bottle bank before the dustbin".

Edward Townsend

Business Diary profile

It is easy to see why the first, and only, visitor mentions our Caracas is the traffic. The oil is useless in any that would make Tokyo order.

A gas guzzler's paradise and "motorist's nightmare", it is said that here should be held a latest meeting of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

But even here, where petrol is cheap, the days of easy money are limited. Venezuela's oil reserves are greatly depleted and its future as a big oil producer depends on the oil price, which Opec pricing philosophy is so keen to emphasise. The 300-mile long, sandy oil belt of the Orinoco holds as many barrels of oil as the whole of the world's own traditional reserves, but large-scale development is still years away.

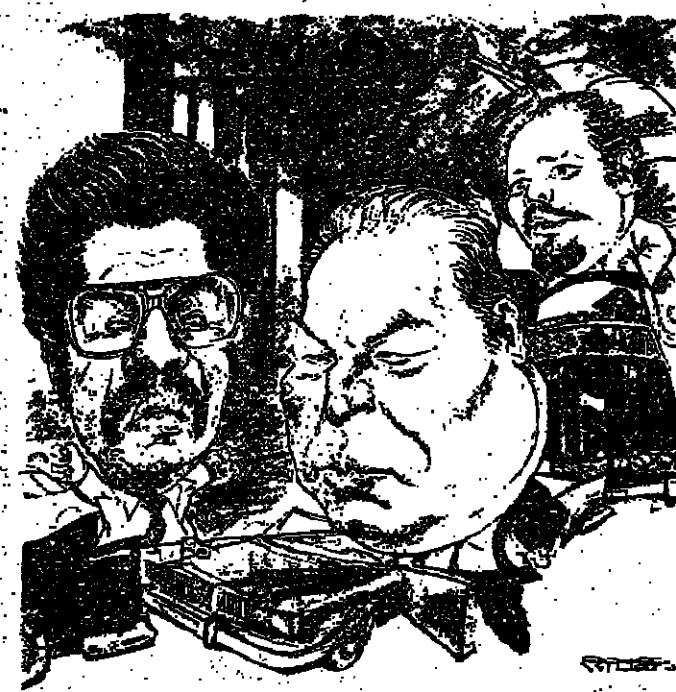
Meanwhile, Opec, the organisation which Venezuela was largely responsible for founding, has become more and more controlled not by the economics of the oil market but by the political realities of the Middle East.

Venezuela—a Catholic country with the only flourishing democracy in South America—is this week host to these delegates from the world of the Islamic revival. It is a

strange mix. Predictions come and go of an Opec collapse due to the strains of the differing religious, cultural and economic interests of countries linked only by their common production of oil.

But the 19-year-old organisation, which in its early stages was dismissed as powerless to influence the multinational oil companies, has survived both—glut and shortage to become arguably the most potent economic force in the world.

Twice a year it meets, as it does today in Caracas, to fix prices—a procedure accompanied by all the ballyhoo of the international press circus. Always it is the Arabs and the figure of Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, the dapper oil minister of Saudi Arabia, the biggest producer of oil in the world, who catch the eye of television cameras and cartoonists alike.



Snarl-up in Caracas: (left to right) oil ministers Shaikh Ali Khalifa Al-Sabah (Kuwait), Ali Akbar Moftari (Iran) and Shaikh Yamani (Saudi Arabia).

waned and, with the shortages caused by the cutbacks in Iran, so has his influence within Opec itself. Yet he remains a formidable

structure to which all Opec countries can suck. If he succeeds, he may regain the initiative to work towards his goal of steady, un-spectacular increases, which will give the West time to adjust to an expensive future energy shortage; and which will bring the cash rewards demanded by the owners of a scarce resource.

The Venezuelans have the same long-term ambitions and want long-term talks about them with the consuming nations.

Libya, a pricing "hawk", would like to set up a fund to help the Third World, while Iran believes that too much has been given away already. Production must be reduced, the West must pay through the nose and, if necessary, reduce its standard of living to accommodate shortages.

For all the economic philosophy with which Opec presents the case for price rises it is really the simple Robbesian world where life is nasty and brutish and oil supplies are short. The justification for increases may be the need to bring prices to a level near the cost of alternative supplies, but really any excuse will do. The hawks push for what the market will bear.

Altruism is in Opec's mind, but not in its heart. Will it always be so?

The trappings of a different kind of organisation are there. There is a secretariat in Vienna which studies the economics of oil in great depth. There are seminars—David Howell, Britain's energy secretary spoke at the last one—where energy problems are discussed.

Shaikh Yamani chairs a "strategic committee" looking at future oil production and pricing.

But over it all is the spectre of a militant Iran, shutting up hostages and shutting down production. Its oil minister, Ali Akbar Moftari, looks more like the symbol of Opec today than the urbane Shaikh Yamani.

Who leads Opec, and may dictate whether it is to become an organisation increasingly in conflict with the western world, will become clearer over the next day or two.

So far, the worst losers since Opec realized the extent of its power after the Yom Kippur War six years ago have been the countries of the Third World. There is talk both of renegeing the "North/South dialogue" and of United Nations-sponsored energy conference—talk also of lower prices for Third World countries. Will the real Opec please stand up?

Nicholas Hirst

62 per cent profit boost for E.J. Riley

Alan R. Deal, Chairman, makes the following points in the Annual Report & Accounts, mailed to shareholders today:

- * Pre-tax profit for the year to 31 July 1979 was £803,023, compared with £496,913 in the previous year, an increase of 62 per cent.
- * Snooker manufacturing profits were 17 per cent higher than the previous year while snooker clubs showed a 45 per cent rise.
- * Furniture Division profits topped the 1977/78 figure by 79 per cent; with the china and glassware retail shops trading profitably in their first year with the group.
- * Final Dividend of 2.5p net per ordinary share recommended by Directors, making a total of 3.5p net (2.6p net in 1977/78).
- * Current Trading: With trading conditions generally difficult, profits in the first few months are below those of last year, but the group has an energetic management team and workforce which will continue to produce favourable results whatever the economic climate.

FINANCIAL NEWS AND MARKET REPORTS

S & N Breweries and Nthn Foods to report

In the last full week before the Christmas holiday period, the market will see a strong contingent of companies reporting from the food and drinks sector, with interim figures from Unigate and Scottish & Newcastle Breweries and full-year figures from Northern Foods.

On Thursday, the Bank of England releases the Central Government borrowing requirements for the third quarter and the money supply figures which are expected to show an increase of about 1 per cent.

This is followed on Friday by the gross domestic product figures for the third quarter released by the CSO, while the Department of Transport will be publishing the new vehicle registration figures for November.

On Tuesday shareholders in MEPC will be anxious to hear of the latest developments in the group's £20m W1 Development in Oxford Street, which it had hoped to have let to Walls Fashion Group, before its serious financial problems attracted the bid from Sears. Most hopes are now pinned on the Burton Group which is now tipped to become the new tenant.

Profits for the full year are pitched at around £13.5m compared with £10.3m last year. The main consideration of this

rise in profits stems from the group's first full property revaluation conducted from outside in over two years. This is expected to reveal asset values of between 220p and 250p.

On the same day full-year figures from Northern Foods are expected to reflect the inclusion of profits from its latest acquisitions which include Pork Farms and Goldrei, Foudard. Estimates range between £25m and £27m compared with £22.4m last year. While good progress has been made on the food side, strikes and the holding steady of flour prices will have worked against the group's milling operations. However, the brewery side is expected to weigh in with a slight increase in performance.

This week

Interim profits from Ferranti on Wednesday are expected to show the ravages of the recent stoppages by the engineering workers and a strike in its own whisky factory. First-half figures are anticipated to be £12.1m-£13.1m mark, compared with £12.2m last time.



Mr P. E. G. Balfour chairman of Scottish & Newcastle Breweries

Hopes for the full year are around £10m to £11m, compared with £9.9m for the corresponding period.

The order book for its computer operations and Scottish factory is strong, while the decision to close its Oldham operation, where the group first began back in 1905 has now been taken.

Thursday sees the interim figures from the other major food group reporting, Unigate. Here the experts are going for around £18m against £15.1m last time with £50m for the full year compared with £43.4m last year. Most of improved performance is expected to come

from the milk operations which account for about 30 per cent of sales, and are sharply up on last year. The dairy products division is also expected to have performed well, in spite of EEC competition, as has its Scott Bower subsidiary.

Thursday also sees the interim figures from the North East-based brewery group, Scottish & Newcastle.

Here, figures range between £23m and £24.6m against £21.6m. The gradual recovery in the group's profits are expected to start showing through in the current year, but market observers expect some of the recovery to be hit by massive interest charges of about 60 per cent which should make a tidy dent in what profits the group had been hoping for in the full year. Figures for the full year are pitched somewhere in the £37m to £39m region compared with £35.7m last time. S & N has now begun to win back a larger share of the North-east market which has been helped by the strike at Federated Breweries in Newcastle and a price increase in February. Profits from Harp Lager are also expected to show through as its reorganization did not take place until September.

TODAY.—Interims: Caffyns, County and District Properties, Crown House, Domb Hilde, Estates and Agency Higgs, Gresham Inv Trs, Kennedy

Smale, London Merchant Secs, National Carbonising and Siebe Gorman Hldgs, Fimale: Attock Petroleum, Heywood Williams, Martia, the Newsagent, North British Steel and Wearta, Grp.

TOMORROW.—Interims: FMC, Laurence Scott, Premier Consd Oilfields, Property Hldg and Inv Trs and Stanhope General Invest Fimale: MEPC, Northern Foods, Nottingham Brick and Plaxtons (Scarborough).

WEDNESDAY.—Interims: Alpinat Inds, Brownlee, Cooper Indus, Dase Inv Trs, Electric and Gen Inv, Equity Consort Inv Trs, Ferranti, Forminster, Hollis Bros and E.S.A., A. Monk, Plym, Radiant Metal Finishing and Ward and Goldstone, Fimale: Bluebell Bros, BOC Int, Greenall Whitley Redman, Heman Ind and Spence Clark Metal Inds.

THURSDAY.—Interims: British Steam Specialities, Doranekand Rubber, ERF Hldgs, Philip Harris Hldgs, Hazlewoods (Property), S. Hoffmann, London and Liverpool Trs, Marston Thomson and Evershed, Norton and Wright, Nova (Jersey), Knit, R. Paterson, Petrow Hldgs, Scottish and Newcastle Brews, Trustee Corp and Unit Fimale: Fimale: Cronie Grp, Hawkins and Tipson and Lazard Bro-Sterling Reserve Fund.

FRIDAY.—Interims: Barleys of Yorkshire and Continuous Stationery, Fimale: Homfrey and Co.

Michael Clark

Discount houses feeling pinch

The recent 3 per cent rise in minimum lending rate has hit the discount houses very hard indeed. In its twenty-fourth annual review of the sector, Montagu Loeb Stanley argues that rumours of bankruptcies and mergers "have been exaggerated".

The broker expects lower interest rates next year to result in small increases in disclosed profits and do not anticipate the new methods of monetary control expected to be announced shortly to have more than a "marginal effect".

Gerrard & National and Union are selected for the quality of their management and long-term view, the brokers expect the number of houses to have dropped to five and see an extension of their range of activities.

Edinburgh brokers, Bell, Lowrie, Macgregor is as one would expect already on top of the bid for Highland Discount. Its conclusion is that the offer from Hiram Walker, the Canadian drinks group, of 130p a share in cash is not unrealistic when set against Highland's underlying share price in the market. The Highland board could well put up an impressive defence on asset grounds.

The broker produces asset figures, including "hidden worth" estimates, suggesting that Highland's underlying asset worth could be as much as 146p a share. This all supports market thinking that if Hiram Walker really wants to

clinch this one it will have to start raising its price.

Staying with the drinks industry, de Zoete & Bevan has been examining the brewery, suggesting how they might fare as they enter the recession, and, worse, that for the first time in recent memory the classical defensive qualities of brewers may not apply. With duty increases likely in the April Budget, de Zoete sees the trading outlook for brewers in the face of pressure on consumer spending becoming progressively harsher as 1980 wears on.

Brokers' views

That said, the broker proceeds to destroy its case by adding that the financial strengths of most brewers are such that relative to other sectors could weather the coming storm reasonably. de Zoete's pessimism is thus "heavily qualified" — the message being don't sell brewers but don't buy ya either. This sounds like a bold move.

Closing its books on 1979 Quilter, Hilton Goodison's monthly strategy notes see the Government almost certainly bringing money supply under control next year. That will lead to lower interest rates and produce a better value market. But in the corporate sector Quilter still worry about falling company

profits, the possibility of industrial unrest, and/or high wage settlements in short inflation.

This of course is not too far from the equity market, as while Quilter maintains the many of the difficulties to companies are already accounted in share prices, chances of a further deterioration in the economy are high, particularly after all the rises which have already started and more of which will come this week.

Advice on equities from Quilter, then, is to be cautious and to consider selling into technical rally. Carr Seaberg in its annual agreement, Prospect of a deep and prolonged recession are certainly strengthening, it says, and the outlook for the corporate sector can only be described as "alarmingly bad".

And there is concern that the impact of the recession will fall disproportionately on corporate profits, which are already dangerously low. Carr Seaberg sees the case for getting stronger daily, in terms of little fundamental support for equities.

Prospects for industrial companies about all this best a question of what happens in the next few months.

Scott, Galt Hancock's top of the sector says profits will be under pressure, particularly in the first half of next year. Worse they will be compared with the first half of this year when sales and profits were moving ahead strongly.

Now could be the time to buy gold shares

One does not need to be a financial wizard to work out why gold mines shares, particularly South African, are so popular. Spurred by yet another record gold price, which was fixed on Thursday at \$461, and made desperate by prognostications that increased oil prices, revolution in Iran, and faster inflation will mean the end of civilization as the investor knows it, rich buyers have been moving strongly into the market.

The possibility of a peaceful settlement in Rhodesia has encouraged greater confidence in South Africa's future than has been felt since Sharpeville. It might therefore appear a little contrary to ask whether this is the time to take profits from gold shares. But the idea is being seriously suggested around the City, and it is worthy of consideration. The point is not that the market is heading for an imminent crash, or even that next year's average gold price will be disappointing—though that cannot

be ruled out—but that shareholders have enjoyed a good run for their money and no harm can come to them if they realise at least some of their gains now.

Mining

That shareholders have done well is clear. Over the last 12 months the gold mines index has more than doubled to 266.4 on Friday, adding 23.2 points over the week alone. Most of this rise has come from close to their highs for the year, with yields for the best quality stocks at around 20 per cent.

Furthermore, one stockbroker has calculated that on a gold price of \$425, the sector's average yield is a mouth-watering 26 per cent. So prices are still attractive if gold slips down again.

Most people in the market believe, however, that the metal price has some way to go yet, and this view seems to be shared by investors. Recent weeks have brought back faces which, as one stockbroker put it, "We have not seen since 1974".

A particular feature has been buying from other European countries, though United States interest has been firm also. London's pre-eminence as the market for gold and gold shares has been reinforced by the latest international buying spree.

An interesting aspect of this spree is the demand for top quality shares. Attention in the present stage of a gold boom often instead is fixed on more speculative mines. Now, however, investors are buying East Driefontein (Gold Fields of South Africa), Kloof (Gold Fields), Southern (Anglo American), Western Deep Levels (Anglo American), to name just the obvious ones.

They are not, stockbrokers say, buying in large lines. Duncan Rodger, Deep (Barclay Road), West Driefontein (Gold Fields) or similar properties.

The significance of demand for the long life mines is that investors would not seem to be trying only to find the greatest leverage to the gold price. One interpretation is that buyers do not expect the average gold price to be very much more in 1980 than in 1979, although they do expect it to remain high.

But against that, a further surge in the metal price—say in the wake of an Opec price increase—could be enough to tempt in the real punters.

Whichever is the case, investment decisions are being reached on expectations of the gold price and of the consequent yield. Nobody at the moment is mulling about the old saw of the gold mining business, present value.

When gold prices are more stable and investors are taking

a view over more than two or three years, they want to know the value of their stake over the mine's life when all factors, especially inflation, are discounted.

So it may be that this time round, remembering the crash of 1976, punters are eschewing the high risk mines and simply settling for record yields of the better ones.

The key to any decision on whether the stake profits now or soon must be how long a investor wants to stay in South Africa. After weighing the political and economic risk he might well come to the conclusion that the prospect of bigger dividends next year is insufficient to offset a fall in average gold price in 1980 or year and renewed fighting on the Republic's northern border. To make the right guess one does need to be a financial wizard, and a luck one at that.

Michael Pres

Caracas meeting could influence tanker rates

With the latest ministerial meeting of Opec beginning in Caracas today, the prospect of another rise in the price of oil from January 1 looms large. In what is seen as a bid to provide the basis for a reunified price among Opec members, four states—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE and Venezuela—took the liberty of increasing their prices by \$6 a barrel last week.

In the case of the first three the rise was backdated to November 1 but Venezuela's runs from December 14. Arab criticism of Saudi Arabia's moderate attitude towards price rises has been increasing of late and this move is aimed at overcoming that.

What the outcome of all this will be for the tanker market it is obviously too early to say. However, the traditional pattern has been for good rates to be maintained as long as no being experienced—in advance of the Opec meeting with a slackening off from Christmas onwards. The extent of this slack period has varied from a matter of weeks to over two months.

As to the current market performance last week saw a strange phenomenon of the rise and fall of vic rates. Quite why the fall occurred is a mystery with brokers suggesting a number of causes of which over-tonnaging in the

Gulf is a common one. For the past few weeks vic rate levels have improved from an average of worldwide 50 up to worldwide 65 paid during last week.

Freight report

At the start of this week there appeared to be no change with three early bookings by Arco, Amoco and BP for trips from the Gulf to the Caribbean and UK/continent were taken at between worldwide 60 and 63. These fixtures were followed

by a number in which rates slumped as low as worldwide 50. BP arranged two vessels for Gulf/West voyages at worldwide 57.5 and worldwide 52.5. Mobil and Exxon took tankers at worldwide 50 for similar trips.

From there on rates started to climb back with around five vic charters to the Caribbean and Europe securing full steam rates of between worldwide 53.1 and worldwide 60.

The outlook for the Gulf sector over the coming weeks is not bright. Fears are being expressed that the current surplus of available tonnage will last well into January and possibly beyond. Other sectors

maintained steady turnover, with particular demands for inter-Mediterranean voyage and tonnage out of the UK.

Problems facing dry cargo owners and charterers over change in terms that China was requesting in its transactions went some way to be solved. However, what fixture were finalized were done in New York as the London market was reluctant to consider the new terms at least at the levels being offered. Among the few Chinese bookings were two grain shipments out of the US Gulf involving 30,000 tonnes at a rate of 38 dollars.

David Robinson

Highest-ever coupon rates fail to entice investors

Record coupon rates for international dollar bond offerings failed to attract much investment demand last week, reports AP-Dow Jones.

According to dealers and bond salesmen, many portfolio managers have yet to make up their minds about whether United States inflation is going to subside soon given this year's 89 per cent increase in the price for Saudi crude oil to \$24 per barrel.

Although there are indications that the United States economy is slowing, some economists are predicting that a peak in United States inflation will not occur until after the middle of next year when the economy has adjusted to higher energy costs.

Under such circumstances, it

would be unlikely for bond yields to decline substantially because investors generally seek to obtain "real yields" that compensate for the loss of purchasing power.

In any case, there was no sign last week that investors were worried about missing a rally that often occurs at the beginning of each year when the cash-flow from bond portfolios is particularly heavy and short-term interest rates usually decline due to seasonal considerations.

A \$100m five-year note offering of GMC Overseas Finance Corp NV at par, bearing 11.0 per cent annually, met with resistance, partly because the issue was priced ahead of the offering period and before yields in the secondary market started

to rise. The notes were expected to start trading at 97.63-98. At 98, the yield to maturity would be raised to 11.55 per cent.

Managed by Morgan Stanley International, the issue is guaranteed by General Motors Acceptance Corp., whose domestic paper is rated "AAA".

Demand was also slack for a \$50m seven-year note issue of Eksporfinans A/S, an export credit agency, backed by Norway's major banks. The syndicate manager, Credit Suisse-First Boston, has indicated that the issue will be priced at 99.75, bearing 11.25 per cent to yield 11.30 per cent. However, Ross and Partners (Securities), a firm that specializes in trading bonds during the offering

period on a "when-and-if-issued" basis, was quoting the notes at a discount from issue price of 2.38 bid, 2.00 offered. Since the offering is for

the offering is 2 per cent, some syndicate members were apparently willing to take a loss to get rid of their underwriting commitments.

Also under offer is a \$50m, five-year note issue of Dade Savings and Loan Association. This is the first mortgage-backed issue in the Eurobond market, but has been previously rated "AAA" by Standard and Poor's Corp. Managed by Kidder Peabody International, the issue carries a 11.5 per cent coupon, in pre-market trading the offering was quoted at a discount from issue price of 2.00 bid, 1.63

offered. This represented the closest quote to issue price of any of the dollar issues under offer.

In a "quasi-public" private placement this week, Aquitaine Co of Canada raised \$30m with a five-year note issue at par bearing 11.25 per cent. Societe Generale in Paris handled the arrangement.

An early indication of the trading level was about 97.75, which raises the yield to 11.8 per cent. Although Aquitaine of Canada issues apparently are not rated, some dealers judged it comparable to weak "A" credit. Aquitaine of Canada is 74.8 per cent owned by the French state oil company, Elf-Aquitaine, but the parent company did not guarantee the issue.

Weekly list of fixed interest stocks

Stock	Latest price	Offer price	Yield
Alb & Wilson 7% Deb	70.00	70.00	7.00
Alb & Wilson 8% Deb	67.00	67.00	8.00
Alb & Wilson 9% Deb	64.00	64.00	9.00
Alb & Wilson 10% Deb	61.00	61.00	10.00
Alb & Wilson 11% Deb	58.00	58.00	11.00
Alb & Wilson 12% Deb	55.00	55.00	12.00
Alb & Wilson 13% Deb	52.00	52.00	13.00
Alb & Wilson 14% Deb	49.00	49.00	14.00
Alb & Wilson 15% Deb	46.00	46.00	15.00
Alb & Wilson 16% Deb	43.00	43.00	16.00
Alb & Wilson 17% Deb	40.00	40.00	17.00
Alb & Wilson 18% Deb	37.00	37.00	18.00
Alb & Wilson 19% Deb	34.00	34.00	19.00
Alb & Wilson 20% Deb	31.00	31.00	20.00
Alb & Wilson 21% Deb	28.00	28.00	21.00
Alb & Wilson 22% Deb	25.00	25.00	22.00
Alb & Wilson 23% Deb	22.00	22.00	23.00
Alb & Wilson 24% Deb	19.00	19.00	24.00
Alb & Wilson 25% Deb	16.00	16.00	25.00
Alb & Wilson 26% Deb	13.00	13.00	26.00
Alb & Wilson 27% Deb	10.00	10.00	27.00
Alb & Wilson 28% Deb	7.00	7.00	28.00
Alb & Wilson 29% Deb	4.00	4.00	29.00
Alb & Wilson 30% Deb	1.00	1.00	30.00

Eurobond prices (yields and premiums)

Country	Issue	Yield	Premium
US	100m 1980	12.00	0.00
US	100m 1981	11.50	0.00
US	100m 1982	11.00	0.00
US	100m 1983	10.50	0.00
US	100m 1984	10.00	0.00
US	100m 1985	9.50	0.00
US	100m 1986	9.00	0.00
US	100m 1987	8.50	0.00
US	100m 1988	8.00	0.00
US	100m 1989	7.50	0.00
US	100m 1990	7.00	0.00
US	100m 1991	6.50	0.00
US	100m 1992	6.00	0.00
US	100m 1993	5.50	0.00
US	100m 1994	5.00	0.00
US	100m 1995	4.50	0.00
US	100m 1996	4.00	0.00
US	100m 1997	3.50	0.00
US	100m 1998	3.00	0.00
US	100m 1999	2.50	0.00
US	100m 2000	2.00	0.00
US	100m 2001	1.50	0.00
US	100m 2002	1.00	0.00
US	100m 2003	0.50	0.00
US	100m 2004	0.00	0.00
US	100m 2005	0.00	0.00
US	100m 2006	0.00	0.00
US	100m 2007	0.00	0.00
US	100m 2008	0.00	0.00
US	100m 2009	0.00	0.00
US	100m 2010	0.00	0.00

Interim Dividend

The Board has declared an interim dividend for the year ending 31st March 1980 at the rate of 3p per share (last year same) absorbing £10.9 million, equivalent with the associated tax credit to 4.28571p per share (last year 4.4761p). The dividend is payable on 22nd February 1980 to shareholders on the register at 11th January 1980.

Review of Trading

Much of the Group's Scotch whisky production capacity, and the Scottish yeast factory, were affected by unofficial strikes which developed early in September in support of a pay claim and were not settled until 18th October. Shipments of Scotch whisky in the six months to 30th September consequently fell considerably short of those for the comparable period in 1978. Gin bottlings in Scotland were similarly affected with a resultant loss of sales in the UK market.

Current estimates of the loss attributable to the industrial dispute indicate that a figure of approximately £9 million is reflected in the trading results for the half year. Because consumer demand in overseas markets could be met, in the main, from distributors' stocks, not all of the sales frustrated by the strikes in September and October will be irretrievably lost, but some will not be recoverable and a consequential diminution of revenue and of profit is inevitable.

Future Prospects

The continued strength of sterling against the currencies of many important overseas markets, in particular the US dollar, the growing effect of inflation upon costs and indications of a softening of demand in some areas, militate against a strong finish to the financial year. In these circumstances the present estimate of the Board is that, absent any unforeseen factors affecting production or sales, the results for the year as a whole are unlikely to differ significantly from those of last year.

DCU The Distillers Company Limited

Unit Trust Prices—change on the week *FT Index change on week 431.0+15.4 (3.7%)*

Drop in beef supply forecast for 1980 despite higher imports

(Current market price multiplied by the number of shares in issue for the stock quoted)

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Open 7 days a week, the classified section which, together with the main body of the paper, is published daily.

BIRTHS

BERRIDGE. On 3rd December at the London to Susan and Hugh—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

BOONE. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

CLARK. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

DOUGLAS. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

EDWARDS. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

GORDON. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

HARRIS. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

JOHNSON. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

KELLY. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

LEWIS. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

MARTIN. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

MURPHY. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

NEAL. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

OLIVER. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

PARKER. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

ROBERTS. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

SMITH. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

TAYLOR. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

WATKINS. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

WILLIAMS. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

WILSON. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

WYATT. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

YOUNG. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

ZEPHYRUS. On December 12th, at the Royal Brompton Hospital, Oxford—A son, James (10lb 10oz).

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